



**COMMONWEALTH ENGAGEMENT WITH
SCHOOL EDUCATION: A HISTORY (1901-2015)**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in 1911 with the mandating of school cadets for all Australian school students from twelve years to eighteen years, the Commonwealth has exerted its influence on Australian schools and colleges. This is despite the Constitution implying education to be a state prerogative. Section 51 outlines the powers of the federal government, and those not listed, such as school education, remain the residual powers of states and territories. This research attempts to analyse what is so attractive to schools and colleges for Commonwealth governments in their policy making. How might this influence of political forces be understood?

Through an organisational framework adhering to the changing nature of federalism, a notion of history acknowledging political imperatives, and the analytical lens of Kingdon's *Agendas*, this research argues school education has become an arena of competing political forces, and has been such since the beginning of Federation. The research establishes, however, Kingdon's *Agendas* requires some tweaking to take into account the rising influences of risk society theory, moral panic theory and the rising influence of social media.

While recognizing federalism is composed of the legal, financial and political, each stage of federalism since Federation has been a party to its own particular kind of policy impacting on school education, broadly conceived.

In examining the politics of Commonwealth leverage on school education, this research eschews any notions of progress, or altruism on behalf of governments in respect to school education policy. It argues school education has become a field wherein policies are developed for party

political ends. Fully exploiting the Constitution since 1911, finding any possible loophole, agenda-setting in policy through school education has become a major task of federal political parties as they seek and maintain government.

ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACSA	Australian Curriculum Studies Association
ACIPHER	Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation
ACU	Australian Catholic University
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AEC	Australian Education Council
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANU	Australian National University
APS	Australian Public Service
ARC	Australian Research Council
ASC	Australian Schools Commission
ATRA	Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities
CAE	College of Advanced Education
CAF	Council of Australian Federation
CCET	Centre for Continuing Education for Teachers (UTAS)
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CNN	Cable News Network
CoA	Commonwealth of Australia
COAG	Council of Australian Governments

COPE	Committee on Primary Education
CSCNEPA	Curriculum Standing Committee of National Education Professional Associations
CPD	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CUP	Cambridge University Press
BOSTES	Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards
DEET	Department of Education, Employment and Training
DER	The Digital Educational Revolution
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DETYA	Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs
DEEWR	Relations Department of Employment, Education and Workplace
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
DOGS	Defence of Government Schools
ELs	Tasmanian Essential Learnings
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GST	Good and Services Tax
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HSIE	Human Society and its Environment
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption (NSW)
JCIPP	John Curtin Institute of Public Policy
JSSP	Junior Secondary Science Project
K(R)-10	Kindergarten/Reception to Year 10
LDP	Language Development Project
MACOS	Man: a Course of Study
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MHR	Member House of Representatives
MUP	Melbourne University Press
NAA	National Archives of Australia

NEU	National Education Union
NAPLAN	National Assessment Plan: Literacy and Numeracy
NFC	National Fitness Council
NMA	National Museum of Australia
NPSI	National Plan for School Improvement
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OBE	Outcome Based Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OUP	Oxford University Press
PLO	Principal Liaison Officer
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PUP	Palmer United Party
QUP	Queensland University Press
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
SA	South Australia
SBCD	School-based Curriculum Development
SCSEEC	Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood
SEMP	Social Education Materials Project
SMH	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
SPP	Specific Purpose Payments
SOSE	Study of Society and its Environment
SOTF	Schools of the Future (Victoria Dept of Edn)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAS	Tasmania
TCAE	Tasmanian College of Advanced Education
TEMAG	Teachers Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TRB	Teachers Registration Board
TSIT	Tasmanian State Institute of Technology
UK	United Kingdom

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UNSWP	University of New South Wales Press
UTAS	University of Tasmania
UWA	University of Western Australia
UWAP	University of Western Australia Press
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VFI	Vertical Fiscal Imbalance
WA	Western Australia
WPR	What's the Problem Represented to be?

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

No.	Name	Party	Began	Left
1	Barton, Edmund	Prot	01-01-01	24-09-03
2	Deakin, Alfred	Prot	24-09-03	27-04-04
3	Watson, John Christian	ALP	27-04-04	17-08-04
4	Reid, George Houston	FT	18-08-04	05-07-05
	Deakin, Alfred	Prot	05-07-05	13-11-08
5	Fisher, Andrew	ALP	13-11-08	02-06-09
	Deakin, Alfred	Lib	02-06-09	29-04-10
	Fisher, Andrew	ALP	29-04-10	24-06-13
6	Cook, Joseph	Lib	24-06-13	17-09-14
	Fisher, Andrew	ALP	17-09-14	27-10-15
7	Hughes, William Morris	ALP Nat	27-10-15	09-02-23
8	Bruce, Stanley Melbourne	Nat	09-02-23	22-10-29
9	Scullin, James Henry	ALP	22-10-29	06-01-32
10	Lyons, Joseph Aloysius	UAP	06-01-32	07-04-39
11	Page, Earle Christmas Grafton	CP	07-04-39	26-04-39
12	Menzies, Robert Gordon	UAP	26-04-39	29-08-41
13	Fadden, Arthur William	CP	29-08-41	07-10-41
14	Curtin, John	ALP	07-10-41	05-07-45
15	Forde, Francis Michael	ALP	06-07-45	13-07-45
16	Chifley, Joseph Benedict	ALP	13-07-45	19-12-49
	Menzies, Robert Gordon	Lib	19-12-49	26-01-66
17	Holt, Harold Edward	Lib	26-01-66	19-12-67
18	McEwen, John	CP	19-12-67	10-01-68
19	Gorton, John Grey	Lib	10-01-68	10-03-71
20	McMahon, William	Lib	10-03-71	05-12-72
21	Whitlam, Edward Gough	ALP	05-12-72	11-11-75
22	Fraser, John Malcolm	Lib	11-11-75	11-03-83
23	Hawke, Robert James Lee	ALP	11-03-83	20-12-91
24	Keating, Paul John	ALP	20-12-91	11-03-96
25	Howard, John Winston	Lib	11-03-96	03-12-07
26	Rudd, Kevin Michael	ALP	03-12-07	24-06-10
27	Gillard, Julia Eileen	ALP	24-06-10	27-06-13
	Rudd, Kevin Michael	ALP	27-06-13	18-09-13
28	Abbott, Anthony John	Lib	18-09-13	15-09-15
29	Turnbull, Malcolm Bligh	Lib	15-09-15	—

Legend

ALP = Australian Labor Party

CP = Country Party

FT = Free Trade (fused with Protectionists to form Liberal Party in 1909)

LP = Liberal Party (first formed in 1909 from Free Traders & Protectionists; reformed in 1944 to replace UAP)

NAT = Nationalist (formed out of Liberal Party and ALP defectors in 1916)

PROT = Protectionist (fused with Free Traders to form Liberal Party in 1909)

UAP = United Australia Party (formed out of Nationalists and ALP defectors in 1931)

(source: adapted from *Australian Politics* (n.d.). Retrieved 17 February 2017 from <http://australianpolitics.com/executive/pm/prime-ministers-since-1901>).

INTRODUCTION

Many people contend politicians see their primary role as winning elections and gaining power for their political party, and they see the primary role of bureaucrats and policy-people as assisting in their cause. In this view, public policy, therefore, becomes a highly politicised process and outcome. This is particularly so within the context of the Australian federalist framework, as governments seek to adapt policy-making to changing times (Fenna & Phillimore, 2013, 192-195) How does this affect the Commonwealth's influence on school education policy?

Essentially, this research is a *select* history of school education in respect to the Commonwealth's engagement with the states and territories. A central focus is a *select* history of the politics of federalism and school education—essentially a tug-of-war between the states and territories and the Commonwealth.

Despite the Australian Constitution implying school education to be a state responsibility, for a plethora of reasons the Commonwealth increasingly has engaged with state school education. As with what is a mammoth Commonwealth concern in the twenty-first century, the federal Constitution infers education to be a state prerogative in that Section 51 outlines the powers of the federal government, and those not listed, such as school education, remain the residual powers of states and territories. This applies to other Commonwealth concerns, such as aged care and health, which have emerged during past decades, concerns which the Constitution left to states and territories.

This research examines how and by what stages the Commonwealth managed to do so in the long history of federation. Today, the Commonwealth touches the school and college life of every student from the Kindergarten through to university. As this engagement intensified following the Menzies postwar era, so did the politically motivated influences of moral panics—some orchestrated by governments—and with the onset of social risk imperatives of the post-1980s, vast new dimensions of the engagement became apparent. These developments are explored in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

An index to the Commonwealth's political engagement with school education comes with the establishment of ministerial responsibility. The appointment of the first federal minister for education was with Prime Minister Robert Menzies's appointment of Senator John Gorton in December 1966. As Chapter Six of this research explains in greater detail, this appointment came during a time of unprecedented involvement of the Commonwealth in school education, as well as in tertiary education. Previously, Commonwealth responsibilities for education were with the Minister-in-charge of Commonwealth Activities in Education and Research under the Prime Minister, a position held by Gorton from December 1963 until December 1966 (NMA, n.d.). What had been the Commonwealth's previous engagements with school education, and why during the last years of Menzies' long term as prime minister did this engagement suddenly intensify? Were the reasons to be found in some form of quaint altruism by the Commonwealth—a desire to improve the lot of children from ordinary Australian families attending government schools—or deeply felt political imperatives, a desire to maintain government, or perhaps some other motive?

These days, so intense and deep is the Commonwealth's involvement in school education, major inter-institutional research efforts have been undertaken into the topic, such as the Whitlam Institute (n.d., n.p.) *Federalism in Australian Schooling: its impact upon quality and equity*. This was an Australian Research Council (ARC) supported project

undertaken by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne, the Whitlam Institute, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Foundation for Young Australians. The project investigated the impact of federalism on Australia's system of schooling and changes in the federal arrangements, potentially increasing the capacity of schooling to deliver better quality and more equitable outcomes. The research project addressed 'how federalism has influenced the structures and processes of school system governance in Australia'. A similar research effort is Professor Jack Keating's (2009, n.p.) *A new federalism in Australian education: a proposal for a national reform agenda*. This was a major research effort, 'made possible through the close collaboration of The Education Foundation and The R.E. Ross Trust'.

Including other recent major research efforts, such as Professor Alan Reid's (2012) 'Federalism, Public Education and the Public Good', the above two major research efforts did not include a history of the impact of federalism on Australian school education from 1901 onwards. A common assumption is this involvement began during the post-World War II Menzies Government. Also, witness research by Welch (2014), which is addressed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Essentially, a select history of the politics of Commonwealth engagement in school education, this research takes the major epochs of federalism as its organising framework. Within a particular epoch it looks to the dominant *zeitgeist* and the particular political dynamics, examining the Commonwealth's engagement in school education. The term 'school education' is defined in its broadest terms: In other words, everything within the school impacting on students' lives.

From the beginning to the end, Commonwealth intervention in school education has been articulated by politicians and policy-makers with the nation-state as the intended beneficiary, a view of education alien to educationists when the various colonial departments of public instruction

were first established. The advent of globalisation, moreover, has accentuated this reasoning.

Commonwealth policy involvement in school education at first sight can be thought of as being messy. During the opening decades of twenty-first century a random viewer, or reader of Australian TV news and current affairs, or print media may be excused for thinking Australian school educational history is a striking case of government policy chaos. An event of 2014 may well illustrate this point.

With a massive majority in the Lower House, but with a Senate dominated by the Crossbenches, the newly installed Abbott Coalition Government handed down its first budget on 13 May 2014. Even by 31 August, however, Peter van Onselen (2014, n.p.) in an opinion piece in *The Australian* wrote:

The return of parliament after the winter recess delivered another depressing illustration of what's wrong with modern politics. Clive Palmer closed the door to certain budget measures passing the Senate and the Opposition continued to play negative politics. But they aren't the only ones to blame for the state of play.

Governments are too hasty in their design of reforms, damaging their capacity to deliver sustainable change the nation needs. Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd made this mistake in a number of policy areas (think climate change and mining tax). Now Tony Abbott is doing the same with his poorly crafted budget.

Oppositions see value in blocking a government's agenda, partly because of badly designed policies but also for political consistency. Opposition strategists worry that if they are too nuanced in what they block and what they support, voters will become confused and political advantage could be lost. Abbott [when leader of the Opposition] was the master of this approach and Bill Shorten [now as Leader of the Opposition] is seeking to emulate him.

While not addressing issues associated directly with policies of school education, there were many similar incidents in federal parliament similar to this and associated with school education policies. Some observers may

contend the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government was rife with these rushed so-called ‘reforms’. On the other hand, this research argues other observers have contended the Abbott-Turnbull Government was no better in this regard. Its planned changes to university fee deregulation, and the alleged hundred thousand dollar university degrees are such examples (Bexley, 2014). This research will contend that over the past three or four decades education has become a developing area for public policy at the federal level, accompanied by an intensifying of surrounding political processes.

Many of the studies of the relationship between the Commonwealth and the states and territories are concerned with such things as narrow definition of the curriculum, or school education funding. This study proposes a much broader basis for study—that of the politics of Commonwealth leverage on school education. To this end, Chapter One of this research looks to describe what school education entails.

For almost seventy years following the federation of the six Australian British colonies in 1901, because of Section 51 of the Constitution referred to on page 1 of this research, Commonwealth governments were very selective in their direct involvement in the prescribed school curricula—narrowly defined—of these states and territories as regulated by the various state and territory departments of education. Indeed, the Australian Constitution deemed school education to be strictly a state responsibility. But to what degree did the Commonwealth intervene, how, and in what areas of school education?

With more than a century of federalism, despite the exclusions determined by Section 51 of the Constitution, the relationship of Australian school education and the Commonwealth has changed considerably. Indeed,

The formation of ACARA [Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority] and the Australian Curriculum has set in motion dramatic shifts in curriculum policy and development processes across the Australian federation. In less than a decade, roles and responsibilities that were unambiguously the preserve of states and territories are now negotiated at the national scale. Whilst the

axis of power is rapidly shifting, however, the mechanics of policy and governance appear to be increasingly opaque. Decisions about curriculum are now made through complex and intersecting intergovernmental channels, including executive forums such as COAG [Council of Australian Governments] and the Education Council, through ‘new breed’ national organisations such as ACARA, and via a host of formal and informal networks between state curriculum agencies. Each of these channels is influenced in new ways by the federal government, which has played a major role in enabling national reform agendas in schooling (Savage, 2017, p. 847).

Indeed, with school education legally entrenched as a residual power of the states and territories, while often giving voice to their concerns with aspects of Australian school education, even prime ministers found it difficult and more of a marathon effort to bring about national change in school education. Through the financial and political levers of the Commonwealth’s relationships with the states and territories, however, a path could be found, and changes in school educational policy is negotiated at a national level, often through ‘an exceedingly complex picture of the workings of federalism’, operating ‘as much in political and financial terms as in legal and constitutional ways’ (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, 94). For example, in his autobiography, former Prime Minister John Howard (2010/2013, 782) wrote on the deficiencies in Australia’s school education system relating as they are ‘predominantly to how and what students are taught, and how government schools are administered’. For Howard, ‘these are overwhelmingly state responsibilities, although the Commonwealth has a say in the National Curriculum, where a major repair job is required in history (and perhaps also the English) syllabus’. Yet, the Howard Government found a path through the constitutional maze, and at times a chaotic political relationship with the states and territories.

Considering the inroads the Commonwealth had crafted in school education, at the time of writing this research, Howard’s (2010/2013) statement seems altogether moderate, while at the same time many commentators would advance an argument even in 2010 the Commonwealth’s involvement in school education extended beyond ‘a major repair job is required in history

(and perhaps also the English) syllabus’ as stated by Howard (2010/2013, 782). It seems as if some politicians are almost compulsive meddlers in national History curricula! ‘Of all school subjects, history is the discipline most targeted by politicians’, claimed Taylor (2014, n.p.). Indeed, ‘ideologically based abuse of history education is a global phenomenon’ (Taylor: 2014, n.p.). All the time advancing the Commonwealth’s impact on school education, Howard continued his relentless assault on the Australian History Curriculum, particularly during the last years of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government. Similar to his apparent motivation in which he personally annotated Taylor’s initial draft of the national History curriculum, as reported by Taylor (2008) in Chapter Nine of this research, Howard wrote in the Liberal Party friendly *Australian*: ‘My fear is that if this curriculum remains unamended, young Australians of the future will be denied a proper knowledge of our nation’s history’ (Howard, 2012, n.p.). As usual, when Howard addressed himself to what should be in the national History curriculum, readers are left wondering exactly what constitutes *a proper knowledge of our nation’s history*?

Howard’s concerns about what should be the content in Australia’s National History Curriculum were matched with other aspects of Australian school education: Witness, for example, the Howard Government’s role in assisting in the growth of independent Christian schools (Howard, 2010/2013, 284).

Coalition governments and Labor governments have differing views on federalism, particularly in the way in which it is worked out in formal inter-governments councils. For example, in responding to the Abbott Government’s first budget, Andrew Lynch (2014, n.p.) in the online *The Conversation* reported how ‘earlier this decade, state premiers railed at the centralisation occurring under the banner of ‘new federalism’ flown by the federal Labor government. There was much talk of the “dysfunctional” nature of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)’. For Lynch (2014, n.p.), ‘there was also a yearning for less agreement and reporting against national benchmarks, and more local control and diversity in the service of “competitive federalism” ’.

How did these ‘yearnings’ materialise? With a change from Labor to a conservative Coalition government, did the decision-making swing from the Commonwealth to the states and territories, or was the reverse the case? What was the impact on educational policy for school education? As the following chapters, however, demonstrate, there are ample occasions when the Commonwealth was involved generally in school education.

These are critical questions currently being researched in attempting to ascertain the impact of federalism on Australian school education—for example, see *Federalism and Australian Schooling* (2010), An Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project to which this research will refer again in Chapter Ten.

Policy as discourse

In the following chapter, I explain how the notions of policy as discourse have influenced the writing of this research. In Chapters Six to Ten, I provide personal statements of how I was a part of, or explain my connection with, certain events in education in schools or universities, as a student, teacher or academic. I do so in order to illustrate my empathies to certain events, political or educational, and particular ideologies, revealing how as a researcher I am also an actant in the discourse, justifying personal statements, verified and triangulated by other sources.

Thesis structure

Chapter One of the research concerns the research problem and the parameters of the study. A select literature review of the research methodology comprises Chapter Two. The changing nature of Australian federalism forms is a major organising feature of this research, which has had a kaleidoscopic history, and this idea is introduced in Chapter Three. Chapter Four examines the early phase of federalism—coordinated federalism especially through the historic lens of compulsory school cadets and a looming war (1901-19). Chapter Five is concerned with what is labelled Cooperative Federalism, which this research subtitles the efficiency

dynamic and the progressive years (1919-39). World War II brought massive changes to the way in which the federal government sought to influence school education. Chapter Six outlines and analyses what is labelled ‘pragmatic federalism’: postwar imperatives and the Menzies years, Coalition governments (1949-72). Chapter Seven describes the Whitlam and Fraser Years (1972-83) as coordinative federalism and Treading Softly, a period of trading softly, but a period of massive changes in Commonwealth/State and territory relation in respect to school education. We have labelled the Hawke and Keating years (1983-96) as corporate federalism, a period impacted by economic rationalism. Chapter Nine is concerned with what is labelled supply-side federalism and globalism. These were the Howard Years 1996-2007). Then comes in Chapter Ten the emerging phenomena of ‘risk society’: constituting national control and the Rudd, Gillard, Abbott, Turnbull Years (2007-2015) in Chapter Ten. Throughout these chapter the organising principle is given over to John Kingdon’s (1984/2003) *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.

Note: It is the candidate’s view that a *thesis* is the argument developed from the empirical research conducted. Consequently, in the absence of any empirical research, in this PhD the word ‘research’ is used to refer to the research and the written document.

CHAPTER ONE

The Research Problem and the Parameters of the Study

Introduction

Taking school education in its wider meaning, the Commonwealth has exerted leverage on it since 1906. This study has a special focus on the politics of that engagement. It is, however, since the time of the Whitlam Government (1972-75) that academics have studied seriously this engagement. By now as researchers study this fascinating topic, they are able to bring into play the mass of literature from several disciplines available as federal governments increase their engagement with school education.

The research focus

Essentially, this research seeks a number of foci:

- The politics of Commonwealth engagement with school education;
- Federalism as an evolving relationship effecting relationships between the Commonwealth and states and territories in school education;
- How a particular form of federalism has exerted a particular form of Commonwealth leverage on school education;
- Suitable lenses assisting in the analysis of the narrative of the history of the politics of Commonwealth involvement in school education, especially in respect to Kingdon's *Agendas*;
- The evolving nature of the politics of Commonwealth involvement in school education; and

-
- The degree of the developing impact of moral panics and risk society imperatives on the Commonwealth's involvement in school education.

Essentially, this research seeks to research a history of the politics of the Commonwealth's involvement in school education, often through the lens of John Kingdon's (1984/2003) *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. An additional lens employed will be social conflict theory, an historiographical theory of change. To achieve these ends, moreover, this research draws on three distinct disciplines—historical enquiry, elements of political science, and public policy analysis.

Federalism and Australian school education

Federalism is a many-faceted creature shaping the Australian political system, shifting over time and usually perceived in terms of one's own political leaning—Labor or conservative, centralist or states' rights—and the perceived roles of the states and the Commonwealth. Essentially political, however wrapped in financial and legal imperatives, the nature of federalism is forever evolving and changing in character as it affects Australian school education.

Researchers have long looked to issues entailed with federalism in respect to school education policy. An early, and what is often-considered benchmark study, was Harman and Smart's (1982) *Federal Intervention in Australian Education*. The study covers the years from World War II to the early years of the Fraser Government of 1975-83. Particularly, valuable and relevant for this research is Birch's chapter, Constitutional Courts, Federal Systems and Education, seeking to 'describe and predict the relationship between the constitutional courts and school policy in federal systems of government' (Birch, 1982, 35). Birch predicted a strengthening of the Commonwealth's role in Australian schooling.

More recently, there have been abundant other studies examining various elements of the history of the Commonwealth's involvement in Australian

schools, usually looking specifically at curriculum (e.g., Reid, 2007; Christie, 1985; Kennedy, 1990) or policy (e.g., Hinz, 2010; Lingard, 1991). As will be explained below, this research holds the term ‘school education’, however, is not synonymous with the term ‘curriculum’, a term sometimes perceived as being much narrower in meaning. I can locate no studies encompassing an examination of a full history of the Commonwealth’s involvement in ‘school education’ broadly defined from Federation to 2015 as this study attempts.

In a recent study of the Commonwealth’s role in school education, Welch (2014, 56) observed: ‘The peculiar paradox of Australian federalism—that the Commonwealth collects by far the bulk of income (by virtue of its sole right to levy income tax), while states are responsible for delivering the bulk of services, including schools and technical education—remains a work in progress’. Moreover, for Welch (2014, 56), ‘in education, the Commonwealth ... is assuming a greater role in the school sector, by virtue of its greater fiscal leverage. This has become a more commonly wielded instrument of federal power, via the increasing use of tied grants, and other such instruments that made federal funds to states conditional on acceptance of specific terms’. These terms, for Welch (2014 56), ‘included in recent years, for example, the provision of Commonwealth funds to the states for education that were made conditional upon acceptance of the public reporting of school performance data by state authorities’.

From here, Welch (2014, 52) proceeded to commit a common error in describing the history of Australian school education and federalism. He attribute the 1964 *States Grants (Science Laboratories and Technical Training)* bill providing Commonwealth funds for science education in schools as being ‘the first breach in the federal wall’. This research, indeed, will demonstrate the first breach occurred in 1911 with the mandating of school cadets for all Australian school students from twelve years to eighteen years, or even in 1906 when the Commonwealth introduced school cadets on a voluntary basis.

In attempting to explain the politics of the Commonwealth's leverage on school education, this research draws on Kingdon's *Agenda*, first published in 1984 and developed through many case studies, has been influential in the study of agenda-setting in public policy. Several studies have been undertaken examining the use of Kingdon's *Agendas* as a lens to examine various elements of the development and enactment of Australian educational policy—for example, Rodwell (2011a); Hinz (2010)—but none utilising Kingdon's *Agendas* as a lens to examine a full history of federal-state-territory relations in school education.

Highly influential since its initial publication in 1984, Kingdon's *Agendas* has stimulated a plethora of research into agenda setting. 'Widely used in classrooms and especially in graduate seminars, it has been cited more than 10,000 times, according to Google Scholar' (Greer: 2015, cited in Béland: 2016, p. 229). What is especially impressive about this book, however, is how it has durably impacted on political science and policy research, in which the multiple streams approach he developed is widely used and debated, in the United States and far beyond (see, for example, Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Hacker, 1997; Baumgartner & Jones, 2005; Zahariadis, 2007; Mehta, 2011; Howlett et al., 2013, all cited in Béland: 2016, p. 229). Moreover, when agenda setting is researched, as is the case in this research, Kingdon's *Agenda* is often a starting point (see, for example, Protess & McCombs, 1991; Rochefort, 2016; Cohen, 2016; Béland, 2016).

Kingdon's *Agendas* is a particularly well-proven analytical lens, providing a platform for analysis of public policy. Essentially, the development and implementation of public policy is not a random event, although ostensibly it may give the impression of being a chaotic event. This research attempts to illustrate the two important variables impacting on the development and enactment of Australian school education are the particular state of federalism at the time, and the *zeitgeist*—spirit of the age, or spirit of the time. The other operative variable acting is that of the particular political dynamic. These variables are constantly interacting.

An historical analysis illustrates a particular narrative of the history of the Commonwealth's involvement in school education. When the research examines the nature of the historical analysis, it is entering into the area of historiography. The study of federalism essentially belongs to the discipline of the political sciences, and here Kingdon's *Agendas* will be used. Because public policy is intensely political in nature, the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be utilized.

The term 'school education' defined

Most often in popular usage the terms 'education' and 'schooling' go hand-in-hand, but they are not synonyms. While in public, and often in professional discourse, many people confuse the terms education and schooling, using them interchangeably. The terms have very different, albeit, overlapping meanings. Schooling is a formal form of education, often with outcomes appropriate to values inherent in ruling elites. Usually, here students are taught in classrooms in a formal setting where architecture, routines such as sporting and cultural events, uniforms, assemblies and so on, combined with a curriculum playing a dominant role. Trained according to state-imposed—now in Australia, nationally mandated—standards, teachers direct their lesson plans around the core of the curriculum. In this sense, report cards—currently in Australia, developed according to national standards and nationally imposed—are a part of the school curriculum. Often paraphernalia such as school uniforms, school assemblies, school office foyers, alumni and sporting regimes play dominant roles. Indeed, theorists often perceive these items and activities as being ingredients of the curriculum. Although a contested notion, postmodernist theorists consider these to be essential and inseparable forces of the wider curriculum (Rodwell, 2009a).

We know people can be educated without schooling. For example, if children work well with their hands and can build things, often as young children from copying their parents or peers, they have learned the practice of, say, engineering. Someone does not have to be teaching students how to read and write to have them educated. Many individuals, for example, learn

to read with little assistance from parents, and are able to read before they commence school. Some readers may assume students who are schooled the most, are the most intelligent and educated. However, what about people who do not have access to schooling? They may still be educated and show their intelligence in other ways, being educated through peers, family, relatives and community-based associations. Schools serve many purposes, and education is a major one.

Often indigenous societies reject European-type schooling (see e.g., Dudgeon, et al, n.d.). This is to illustrate notions of schooling are culture-bound, and European-style schooling is not accepted always as being important in indigenous societies. Although, of course, education is vitally important in indigenous societies, in order to survive all societies have developed systems of education. The idea of formal schooling, however, came much later, and during the second part of the twentieth century came under challenge (see, e.g., Robinson, 2006).

Any approach to the writing of the history of Commonwealth involvement in school education needs to be in accord with current views of the meaning of the word ‘curriculum’. Cornbleth (1990), for example, alerted the reader to the fact by the twenty-first century, the word ‘curriculum’ has taken on vastly broadened meanings. The meaning of the word, for some has become contextualized to encompass a whole range of activity associated with schools, students, teachers and the process of learning, much of it of a highly politicized nature (Pritchett, Banerji & Kenny, 2013).

Federalism and school education

When Christopher Pyne, federal Minister for Education, commissioned a review of the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) curriculum, Latika Bourke (2014, n.p.) from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) reported, ‘sweeping changes to the national curriculum are unlikely to be ready for the 2015 school year, despite widespread agreement the syllabus needs decluttering’. This was just another instance illustrating how school education, now was locked in Commonwealth control.

The constitutional Framing Fathers ensured the states held control over public school education. Harrington (2011, 1) explained what the Australian Constitution prescribes concerning school education, and ‘constitutionally, state and territory governments have responsibility for education’. Thus, these governments, ‘take responsibility for the regulation of school education and the administration and funding of government schools. Public education is the principal means by which governments meet the commitment to universal access to education, generally compulsory in Australia up to the age of 16’. Commonly, when the Constitution was framed, in most states the school leaving age was fifteen years, with many pupils leaving school at fourteen years. A century later, the Commonwealth had elbowed its way into this state legislation to the extent that under the terms of COAG’s Compact with Young Australians, all young people are required to participate in schooling—or an approved equivalent—to Year 10, and then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities until age 17 (DEEWR, 2010e, n.p.). It should be noted, state and territory governments also provide supplementary funding for non-government schools.

At the time of the framing of the Australian Constitution, state-sponsored secondary education was just beginning in the major states of New South Wales and Victoria (Barcan, 1980). It was then common to refer to primary education as ‘elementary education’ because many people considered the role of a primary school was to impart the elements of education, the 3Rs—or reading, writing and arithmetic. Chapter Four of this study shows Commonwealth involvement in school education initially involved no more than a small financial assistance to school cadets, an aspect of school education which would in 1911 be mandated for all students from twelve years to eighteen. With the mandating of school years in the curriculum, however, there was a resulting massive effect on the curriculum and day-to-day activities in Australian schools (Pyvis, 2007).

Educational researchers long have been interested in the manner in which federalism impacts on aspects of school education (e.g., Harman, & Smart, 1982; Lingard, 1998; Connors, 2007, 2013). Typically, much research on federalism and school education centres on funding arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states and territories.

Writing on the topic of what Angus (2007) sees as Australia's schools funding imbroglio, Dowling (2007) referred to the great, if not surprising, disconnect in Australian federalism resulting from constitutional arrangements for school education. States and territories have much to gain—usually in the form of some political agenda—from the inherent horse-trading resulting from federal-state-territory deals. There are winners and losers, with states and territories vying for deals that will ‘bring home the bacon’ out of which they can make political capital. Witness Gould (2014, n.p.), writing in *The Conversation* following the 2014 federal budget, who reckoned: ‘The federal budget reignited debate over federal-state-relations with a decision to cut \$80 billion funding for the state responsibilities of schools and hospitals over the coming years’. This prompted him to ask, ‘how can federal-state co-operation in education make Australia a better country?’

With the financing of education in Australia being a controversial topic for decades, Gould (2014, n.p.) observed, ‘almost everyone is affected or connected in some way to it’. Indeed, ‘considerations have been made about performance standards and equity in attaining desired standards, but these issues have tended to morph into “give us more money” and “who should pay” ’ (Gould, 2014, n.p.). Reflecting on what has occurred with school education and federal-state-territory relations, Gould (2014, n.p.) asserted, ‘this focus on finance has enabled centralists to move the federal government more into the management of education institutions with the use of its stronger financial situation’.

However, as Gould (2014, n.p.) noted, all of this Commonwealth involvement in school education, ‘is limited by the constitution, which gives

states responsibility for education’. Tied grants are another alternative, albeit, not always acceptable by the states and territories. Here the Commonwealth needs to negotiate individually with each state and territory. Thus, here enters the political dimension of federalism.

All interested parties—the Commonwealth, states and territories—at various times benefit from the difficulties contained in federalism in respect to the financial elements providing the platform for politics. During a long period of Howard’s Coalition Government, Bates (2006) and Reid (2007) contended there was a definite imbalance with private schools brought about by federal funding.

Connors (2013, n.p.) also championed these findings, arguing ‘it is not hard to find examples over the years of states and territories using the availability of funds from the Commonwealth for particular policy objectives as an opportunity to withdraw their own funding from that area of endeavour or to divert it to other purposes’. Connors (2013, n.p.) argued under Coalition governments, private schools have been beneficiaries of the government’s funding priorities through federalism, encouraging, ‘the diversion of their own private funding from recurrent purposes like staffing to building up capital facilities’. This is a repeated theme with Coalition governments. Witness federalism under the Abbott Government, described in Chapter Ten of this research. Since the Menzies Government, federalism has become a conduit for political ideology under any political persuasion.

Dowling (2007, 1) drew attention to the emerging metaphor coined to describe this mismatch expectations generated from political motives and federalism in respect to school education. He reminded us, ‘in Australia, colonial railways were built to three different gauges, a problem in pre-Federation days once the lines of different systems met’. Today, in the public discourse concerning federation and the demands from the various interested parties in school funding. The term ‘ “rail gauge debate” ... refers to any policy area in Australia requiring national harmonisation, but where

sensible consistency is prevented for some reason. “Rail gauge” issues are particularly evident in school funding’.

Dowling (2007, 1) argued school funding—an area of education ‘that should be most amenable to quantification and measurement’—is ‘plagued by inconsistency’. Often it is an area shrouded in concealment, and, ‘arguably, the lack of consistency and transparency in this area has a broader impact, as all other aspects of education are dependent on the primary issue of funding’. While theoretically, ‘it is possible to measure and report school resourcing in a clear and logical fashion, yet it remains resistant to greater comparability, transparency, and accountability’. It is for this reason the Australian Education Union (AEU) and state and territory education departments are most interested in the transparency issues of Commonwealth funded school education.

Dowling (2007) referred to a series of papers commissioned by the NSW Public Education Alliance arising from widespread concerns within the education sector about the ways in which the interaction between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments within Australia’s federal system affect policies for schools and colleges and the setting of educational priorities. He suggested a paper by Angus (2007) in this collection, which argued financial reporting remains obscure because of the lack of will by those who may have done so. It is simply not in any party’s political interests to fix what some see as a problem. Put simply, for Angus (2007), politicians generally do not see this as necessarily being a problem, but often an issue to their advantage. ‘Maximum flexibility comes from maximum obscurity, which appeals to politicians seeking maximum freedom to do as they will’ (Angus, 2007, 114, 116, cited in Dowling, 2007, 2). This is where the financial aspects of federalism interface with the political. The Commonwealth, states and territories, ‘ritualistically allocate blame to each other using different sets of data while the real knowledge needed for a new debate, one about the relationship between student performance and school resources, fails to materialise’ (Angus, 2007, 114, 116, cited in Dowling, 2007, 2).

While to many it may seem a mess, out of the confusion and the politicking and the horse-trading, which often followed at various times depending on the particular political circumstances, the various parties may benefit.

For Hinz (2009, n.p.), there is no denying the negative impacts of the apparent mess now surrounding federalism and school funding. Indeed, ‘research to date has had little impact because it ignores the complex, dynamic and interactive nature of Australian federalism within which school funding operates’. Hinz’s (2009, n.p.) research sought to understand federalism as, ‘a complex and dynamic set of governance systems, processes and structures, interacting with society and political actors and institutions, is central to understanding and enhancing Australia’s school funding settlement and indeed other spheres of complex and concurrent State and Commonwealth activity’). These same beliefs underpin this present research.

Analysis and conclusions

Federalism is complex and dynamic, and open to interpretations from various ideological perspectives. A study of the history of the Commonwealth’s leverage on school education needs to be seen in this highly nuanced framework.

Political scientists may provide specialists expertise on the suggestion advanced by Hinz (2009) in respect for the need to look at the politics of federalism in relation to school funding. Educational researchers, however, need to be mindful of the need to focus their research on an understanding of these political motives. Consequently, this research advances the need for the use of Kingdon’s *Agendas* as well as conflict theory as a lens for analysing the findings of the various chapters of research contained in this research. Conflict theory will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

A Select Literature Review of the Research Methodology

Introduction

This research draws on the disciplines of political science and policy studies in the use of Kingdon's *Agendas* (1984/2003) as a lens to assist in analysing why some policies in school education are accepted by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, while some may never become policy. Others are forged through dramatic moral panics. There is a need to examine critically policy and the discourse on policy, and for that reason CDA also is used as an analytical lens.

The notion of a select history

Historians have long abandoned any attempt to catalogue all the facts of a particular event in an objective manner. Best and Kahn (1989) suggested this highlights one significant problem with historical research in education. Many people expect objectivity in research. Indeed, they expect in historical research the same certainty and objectivity they find in mathematics, or physics. Such concerns are usually stated in the following way: 'The historian cannot usually generalize on the basis of past events. Because past events were often unplanned, or did not develop as planned, because there were so many uncontrolled factors and because the influence of one or a few individuals was so crucial, the pattern of factors is not repeated' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 61, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 52). The historian responds within the parameters of his or her craft, depending, 'often witnesses of

doubtful competence and sometimes of doubtful objectivity' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 61, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 52).

Indeed, as Best and Kahn (1989) show, histories are written and rewritten, and are never complete; or at least in the view of the author(s) is never considered to be completed: 'The historian is much like a person trying to complete a complicated jigsaw puzzle with many of the parts missing. On the basis of what is often incomplete evidence, the historian must fill in the gaps by inferring what has happened and why it happened' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 61, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53). Indeed, for Best and Kahn, 'history does not operate in a closed system such as may be created in the physical sciences laboratory. The historian cannot control the conditions of observation, nor manipulate the significant variables' (61, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53).

This situation, moreover, is made more problematic by the pervading contemporary mindsets which often befuddle and confuse, warping the thinking of members of society-at-large. For example, in 1992, I outlined in a chapter for a book devoted to research methodologies in education, how difficult it was researching work, during the Committee on Primary Education years (COPE) years in Tasmania, where the subject-matter of the research was contradictory to the child-centred pedagogy dominating thinking in Tasmanian education (Rodwell, 1992b). Indeed, for my research at that time difficulties arose in researching a paradigm challenging the accepted general beliefs held concerning the Tasmanian Department of Education in the protection of children under its care. This research was concerned with eugenic-inspired activities within the department during the interwar years urging the sterilization of intellectually handicapped children. At the time of this research, I was a school principal, employed by the department. When I requested a week's leave without pay to research a particular aspect of this issue, the Tasmanian Department of Education refused my request, adding my research did nothing to add to the department's existing mission (Rodwell, 1992b, 108-111). Certainly, this dark aspect of the department's history, *vis-à-vis* the policy of sterilization

of intellectually handicapped children, did not appear in Phillips' (1985) official study of the history of the Tasmanian Department of Education; from my attempts to uncover the history, I was left with an impression the department wanted to keep it that way. Yet, despite these small setbacks, historical analysis of education proceeds as a dynamic research methodology.

Best and Kahn (1989) listed five points advancing historical analysis in education against charges of being 'unscientific'. 'The historian delimits a problem, formulates hypotheses, or raises questions to be answered, gathers and analyses primary data, tests the hypotheses as being consistent or inconsistent with the evidence and formulates generalizations or conclusions' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 62, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 61). Moreover, for Best and Kahn (1989), 'although the historian may not have witnessed an event or gathered data directly, he or she may have observed the event from different vantage points. It is possible subsequent events have provided additional information not available to contemporary observers' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 62, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53). Indeed, 'the historian rigorously subjects the evidence to critical analysis in order to establish its authenticity, truthfulness and accuracy' (as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53). Moreover, 'in reaching conclusions, the historian employs principles of probability similar to those used by physical scientists' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 62, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53). Admittedly, 'although it is true that the historian cannot control the variables directly, this limitation also characterizes most behavioural research, particularly non-laboratory investigations in sociology, social psychology and economics' (Best & Kahn, 1989, 62, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 53).

It is, however, a kaleidoscopic world in which educational historians work their craft. Over two decades ago, Petersen (1992) commented with the development of knowledge, the boundaries within which the historian of education legitimately claimed to be able to operate had narrowed, or at least had changed dramatically: 'The world of learning represents a division of labour among scholars; by conventions, at any time, knowledge is

mapped out into territories and scholars do not carry out raids over the border without impunity' (Petersen, 1992, 3, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 54). For Petersen (1992), 'the map is always altering as new areas of knowledge grow up and fight for recognition. Once upon a time, history of education claimed sovereignty, or was allowed to claim it, over anything to do with schools or children' (Petersen, 1992, 3, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 54). Even in the early-1990s, Petersen (1992) showed, 'there is 'the history of childhood, the history of family, women's history, Aboriginal history, sports history, history of popular culture—a host of other histories, all of which by convention, share frontiers as the case may be' (Petersen, 1992, 3, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 54).

So the parameters for the history of education are never fixed, and there are always new challenges for the educational historian. This present research is one such attempt at a step in a new direction, perhaps even the beginning of histories of Commonwealth engagement on school education.

A critical assessment of the research methodology

Best and Kahn (1989) stated, 'the historian rigorously subjects the evidence to critical analysis in order to establish its authenticity, truthfulness and accuracy' (Best and Kahn, 1989, 61, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 52). This research is founded on the well-established historical research methodology of, first, looking to primary sources (government documents, newspapers, professional newsletters and oral sources), then triangulating these in order to test their inherent veracity; these are, then, tested out with reputable secondary sources.

As Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 68-69) have demonstrated, these primary sources all have their own particular strengths and weaknesses. Rightly, the authors point to inherent strengths and problems with government documents. From the point of view of this research, also associated with this are government newsletters or web pages, such as those by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), intended to be read by people from schools, colleges and universities, and

the general public. These, however, all have their particular strength. Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 69) reminded, us governments most always have an eye on a forthcoming election. So, any legislation, or indeed, any other government document, should be read in that light. After all, government, ‘laws and resolutions help show an official position on a particular issue that often reflects underlying tensions within society. An examination of these laws may indicate emerging issues in a society, or may help to reveal power relationships during a time or place’.

Many of the following chapters will reveal this was exactly the case with the history of Commonwealth involvement in school education, a fact fully justifying the *qualified* use of official sources, such as government policy documents as a basis for research. In a reading of these sources, however, CDA is desirable, because of the political language often used in these documents.

Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 72) alerted researchers of the need for caution in the use of newspapers: ‘Although these sources provide a popular view into a time period, the fact newspapers often report on events based on the evidence a reporter has collected gives newspapers and magazines some of the characteristics of a secondary source’.

In addition to the role the media may play for its own ends in the development of a moral panic and its role as an actant in policy development and implementation, there are other reasons for taking care with the use of the media as a knowledge source in this research (Anderson, 2007). It is for this reason this research examines and triangulates news items—for example, in *The Australian*—in the light of recent research on public discourse, the media and educational policy in order to elicit an understanding of possible political motives underpinning these reports. Witness the role *The Australian* played in respect to the Building Education Revolution (BER), as described in Chapter Ten. Indeed, the extensive use of newspapers as a primary source in this research is justified in view of what Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 72) contended is another valuable aspect

of the source—that is, their ‘use to historians interested in examining language as a means to recover meaning’. Consequently, for example, this research is interested in the way in which *The Australian* and other newspapers from the News Corporation and other news media organisations used language to construct and maintain a public discourse casting in this case the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government in a particularly negative light. Research by such authors as Smith (1991) in the role of newspaper coverage and public concern about community issues are important in agenda setting, and relating directly to this issue.

Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 72) also claimed much value for oral evidence as a primary source. Its value comes in the fact oral interviews and correspondence can be *constructed* to triangulate evidence advanced from other primary sources, such as official documents and newspapers: ‘Because this source falls into the category of a created source—one intentionally generated through a planned and orchestrated oral interview—knowledge of the interviewer, intended audience, purpose, and point of view are critically important in weighing the value of the testimony’. The authors, however, insisted oral sources must withstand the rigor of a critical evaluation like any other source. That is, they need to be triangulated against other primary sources, and against secondary sources. Witness the role this research has to the evidence advanced in this manner by the correspondence from Skilbeck (2015a, 2015b) and Riddle (2015).

This methodology does not posit any greater value on any particular type of source—for example, reports from newspapers are considered to hold as much veracity as do oral sources. They all possess a particular purpose in this research. Consequently, testing these primary sources out with secondary sources provides added meaning and veracity to the arguments advanced in this research.

Galgano, Arndt and Hyser (2008, 38) pointed to some important considerations in the selection of secondary sources:

- Who is the author?

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- Who is the audience for the work?
 - When was the source written?
 - Who published the secondary source?

In respect to the last point, the authors insisted on the need for reputable peer-reviewed material. This, of course, is a criterion posing severe question regarding the use of the Internet. They stated, ‘the egalitarianism of the Internet, one of its great strengths, can also be a weakness, because there is no peer review process’. Hence, there is a need to triangulate evidence gathered from the Internet with peer-reviewed secondary sources.

Vexed questions of objectivity, and the relative value of various ‘voices’ and ‘key players’

This research purports to be only *a* history of Commonwealth involvement in Australian school education, and not *the* history of that topic. Thus, like all histories this is a *select* history, and does not attempt to be a *comprehensive* history. Historians have long since abandoned any attempt to write a complete, or comprehensive, history of any event as broad in scope as this proposed history. Indeed, in this respect, readers are reminded of how E.H. Carr (1964) drew attention the work of Professor Sir George Clark, in his General Introduction to the second *Cambridge Modern History*, who commented, ‘expect their work to be superseded again and again. They consider knowledge of the past has come down through one or more human minds, has been “processed” by them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter ... The exploration seems to be endless’ (*The New Cambridge Modern History*, 1957, xxiv-xxv, cited in Carr, 1964, 7-8). Simply put, it is most likely, as with *The New Cambridge Modern History*, this research can only profess to be a point in a long continuum of research associated with the history of the role of the Commonwealth in Australian school education.

As Best and Kahn (1989) argued, no history can claim to be *objective*. Even for a history to claim to be *balanced* is problematic, certainly offering a challenge for researchers. Megill (2007, 110) insisted a ‘balanced’ view of

objectivity implies, 'objectivity is attained when all points of view are recognized, each finding its appropriate spokesperson'. Megill (2007) showed often this is an impossible ideal for an historian; certainly the attainment of balance for this study would be a challenge, where so many points of view are concerned.

Carr (1964, 120) wrote much about the possibility of objectivity in history, and insisted there 'cannot be an objective fact, but only of the relation between fact and interpretation, between past, present and future'. Moreover, for Carr (1964), 'the facts of history cannot be purely objective, since they become facts of history only in virtue of the significance attached to them by historians' Carr, 1964, 120).

Contemporary history: 'many historical judgements are interim'

Some critics may contend there are serious problems with researching a history research on this topic when many aspects of the research are so close to actual events. Dowell (2002), however, considered contemporary history may appear to offer the best opportunity to enhance our understanding of the past, be it ever so immediate. However, he posed one serious problem associated with this claim: It might be contended sometimes events are too close to us to, 'examine them with a sufficient degree of historical detachment'. For example, some may argue feelings are still too highly pitched, 'the wounds too fresh'. In this respect, some people may contend the Abbott-Turnbull Government's reversal of the Gonski initiatives for funding of the nation's schools from the previous Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government is an example of this.

In his general introduction to the second *Cambridge Modern History* referred to above, Professor Sir George Clark commented historians expect their work to be superseded, time and time again. McDowell (2002) agreed, stating, 'many historical judgements are interim, to the extent that there is always the potential for new evidence to appear or for new interpretations to emerge which might overturn or modify our existing knowledge of past events' (McDowell, 2002, 12, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 59). As McDowell

(2002) argued, ‘historians who study contemporary history do sometimes have the added option of being able to arrange interviews with participants of past events’ (McDowell, 2002, 12, as cited in Rodwell 2009a, 61). This was certainly the case with this research, where oral sources were readily available, and positively responded to questions on their memories of Commonwealth involvement in school education.

Issues of historiography

On the eve of the launching of John Howard’s (2014) *The Menzies Era*, Cater (2014, n.p.) from the right-wing Menzies Research Centre wrote in *The Australian*, ‘history in Australia is written by the vanquished, not the victors, a truism born out by the glut of books about the last two terms of Labor government hogging the shelf space at your local Dymocks’.

In a sense, Howard’s book is an outcome of the History Wars of the 1990s and early 2000s, described in Chapters Nine and Ten of this research. More directly, however, ‘the idea for ... the books came from that eminent Australian [right-wing] historian Geoffrey Blainey’ [who] ‘at the second launch of the second edition of my autobiography, *Lazarus Rising* ... said to me, “Why don’t you do a biography of Menzies. You can write it very much from the political perspective” ’ (Howard, 2014, 1).

In reviewing Howard’s book, Cater (2014, n.p.) claimed: ‘When Gillard declared in 2011 the carbon tax place Labor ‘on the right side of history’ she could be confident she was correct, since the received narrative is written by the Left, while the Right sits back and grumbles’. But through Howard’s new book *The Menzies Era: the years that shaped Modern Australia*, the Right fights back, attempting to break the grip of the Left on our recorded history: ‘The Left had been giving Menzies a wallop for the past 50 years while the Right has been cowering in the corner’. Indeed, for Cater (2014, n.p.), ‘anything that may make Menzies sound interesting is purged from the colourless and partisan narrative, his achievements ignored lest they disturb that nothing worthwhile happened here before Whitlam’.

Above all, the writing of history is very much a point of view. Writing on the day of the announcement of Gough's death (Owens, 2014) and having lived through both the Menzies and Whitlam governments, for me there is little comparison between the contribution two men made to Australian school education. For me, Whitlam was *the* colossus of Australian politics. That, however, is simply my point of view, but a point of view, nevertheless, colouring the assembling of the occurrences—the so-called facts—and the writing of this research. For me, Whitlam represented progress far greater in his short three years than Menzies in his seventeen years. While for others Whitlam represented regression.

History versus the writing of history: historiography and a question of values

People write history to make sense of the past, and they do so according to their own ideological framework or values. In simplistic terms, some historians perceive history as progress and general betterment for society and individuals. Generally, I term these historians evolutionary idealists or Whig historians. Other historians write from a neo-Marxist perspective. I term these social control historians.

When considering historiographical issues in the writing of history, I wrote 'it is the very question of evolutionary idealists' interpretation of history—historiography, if you will—motivating Wakeling to look to Hayden White (H. White, 1982, 17-18, as cited in Rodwell, 2013, 144-45). Indeed, more than most scholars in postcolonial history, White has been influential in persuading writers of history to question their values in interpreting history. First, writers need to recognise history as chaos, or something close to it. According to White, 'the chaos of phenomena in the past that constitutes the most meaning of "history" is, in its very ordering and setting down, made meaningful within the particular non-contradictory, unitary world-view or ideology' of the evolutionary idealist (H. White, 1982, 17-18, as cited in Rodwell, 2013, 144-45). There can be no agnostic, innocent historical interpretation—all writers of history are bound in an ideology of one form or other: 'There can be no "history" without ideology' (Wakeling, 1998, 18,

cited in Rodwell, 2013, 144-45). While historiography has different meaning in various countries, this research concurs with the view proffered in White (1982) Wakeling (1998) and Rodwell (2013).

Evolutionary idealists

Generally, evolutionary idealists take little notice of the political motivation underpinning decision-making in Australian history of education. For example, in his celebratory history of Tasmanian government schooling Phillips (1985) totally neglects this perspective. His perspective tends to be from the ‘big players’ in the field of state education—that is, the executive of governments and leading politicians. Phillips (1985) eschewed examining deeper underpinning of political motivations.

Evolutionary idealists also tended to equate schooling with education. However, it is obvious from references to home environments, families, neighbourhoods, peer-groups, churches, and so on, that schooling is only a part of a larger process constituting an individual’s education. Certainly, Phillip’s (1985) study is about schooling as education. Maybe, one should expect that because of the reasons behind the research being commissioned. However, when Phillips (1985) researched his history of the Tasmanian Department of Education, other historical research paradigms were prominent in Australia. Readers of his work need to recognise why he chose—his motivation—to write within the evolutionary idealist paradigm, choosing to write the history of the Tasmanian Department of Education in terms of progress and triumphalism.

Curthoys and Docker (2006) drew attention to the work done by Butterfield (1931) in drawing criticism to evolutionary idealism, or a Whig interpretation of history: ‘History should not be written as a story of progress. Butterfield (1931, 98) not only argued against triumphalist tendencies in historical writing, but also raised doubts about the possibility of objective history itself’ (as cited in Curthoys and Docker, 69).

Indeed, Bob Bessant (1991) described how the historiography of Australian education has been steeped in the Whiggish tradition of describing the great progress of Australian education. The 1970s were the halcyon years of this tradition, and was only challenged during the 1980s by a small band of revisionist and feminist historians. Amongst these educational historians was a group commonly labelled social control theorists.

Social control theory

Popular during the 1960s, through until the late 1980s, were historians who wrote in terms of school education as social control. Curthoys and Docker (2006) show these historians were inspired by the work of such historians as Thompson's (1963) *The Making of the English Working Class*. This work, according to Curthoys and Docker (2006, 139), 'announced a new and very influential kind of Marxist history, interested in process and relationships as much as categories and structures, and deeply respectful of the ideas and aspirations, however mistaken or unsuccessful they turned out to be, of working people'.

These revisionist, or neo-Marxist historians, went on to articulate a powerful alternative account of Australian educational history. They were inspired by American histories such as Katz's (1971) *Class, Bureaucracy and the School* and Bowles' and Gintis' (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America*. Miller's *Long Division* (1986) is an extremely well researched and convincingly articulated example of the social control school of history of education in a South Australian setting.

For the social control historians, school education is not a progressive gain, but rather a means by which the masses are maintained in a form of social control in order to serve the ends of the political elite—the bourgeois, or capitalist ruling class. Indeed, class and class control are at the centre of their thesis. These historians write from the perspective of the working class. Miller (1986, 1) began her history with the sentence: 'One ordinary day in 1875, South Australia's children suddenly discovered school attendance had become compulsory'. There is no exclusive view from

above, or ‘the big end of town’ here, as with the evolutionary idealists, but, rather, history written from ‘below’. The reader immediately engages with the lot of South Australian working-class children, and through them, Australian students, generally.

Social control historians are concerned with an analysis of the processes of decision-making in education. They seek to examine the level and kinds of decisions, their location within the educational machine, the participants in the process and the nature of the mechanism, affecting the daily lives of all children, for the better or the worse. From Miller’s (1986) first page, the reader is asked to think about First Nation Australian children; this is a concern reappearing time and time again throughout the text. Witness the number of entries under ‘Aboriginal’ in the index of her book. The title of her work—*Long Division*—tells it all. Because, according to her thesis, that is exactly what the Australian colonial Education Acts did for Australian society.

For the social control historians, the essential purpose of popular education is to control the masses, and at the same time to provide a control more complete and effective than ignorance and illiteracy and, consequently, more useful to the bourgeois state. Here, refinements and extensions of the school system are viewed as simply improvements in the mechanisms of control.

Consequently, social control historians postulate school education as essentially occurring in institutions of training, socialisation and indoctrination, where children acquire ‘proper’ personal and social habits. Children learn the ‘truths’ justifying habits and virtues, rendering articulate the concepts of the popular mind. The school curriculum is a vital agent of social control. Working-class children especially must learn the ‘correct’ knowledge, and develop ‘correct’ attitudes. Most importantly, they must learn to speak ‘correctly’ and forget any working-class slang they may have acquired from home.

From the last two points made, the social control perspective allows Miller (1986) to analyse in-depth issues associated with feminist education. Broadly, she contended the political elite, the bourgeoisie who engineered the Education Acts sought to control the knowledge and attitudes of working-class children—and for her, working-class girls, in particular. For example, she argued domestic science became increasingly important as an agent to ensuring working-class girls acquired ‘appropriate’ domestic knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, it follows from the last points, the social control model places schooling at the centre of the educational process: The colonial Education Acts were about schooling the working class towards preconceived ideas about desirable behaviours and knowledge. Indeed, the Education Acts were concerned principally with schooling, over and above school education.

Postmodernists paradigms in the research of the history of education

Curthoys and Docker (2006, 180) surveyed the monumental changes sweeping over historical writing in the last three decades of the twentieth century, insisting: ‘There was a remarkable flowering of innovative historical writing ... gender history, micro-history, cultural history, history of sexuality, history of the body, and subaltern and postcolonial histories’. Moreover, for Curthoys and Docker (2006, 180), ‘important for these new histories, in both content and form, were the twin strands of postmodernism and post-structuralism, modes of thinking that influenced all the humanities’.

‘All the humanities’, indeed, including the history of education, have researched and written in the postmodernist paradigm. Since the 1990s, educational historians, while still interested in the control dynamic, have tended to look away from social control theory to postmodernist paradigms. Here, control, either at a school level, or at a national level, is seen as a more subtle thing. In the wider conception of curriculum, a postmodernist interpretation conceives of such school rituals as assemblies and uniforms, and indeed, the school’s very architecture, as asserting an all-embracing control over individuals. Here, researchers such as Ryan and Grieshaber

(2005), Peters (1996) and P. McLaren (1995) have made considerable contribution to an understanding of the history of education. Moreover, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, any history of education is bound to touch on this paradigm in its research methodology, as indeed, this research does.

Iggers' (2005) discussion on the contribution of postmodernists to historical writing remains as one of the most thoughtful yet to be published. For example, referring to the search for objective historical knowledge—an issue discussed earlier in this research—Iggers (2005, 139) claimed: 'Postmodernism had raised important epistemological questions that radically challenged the possibility of objective knowledge', an issue this chapter will develop further below.

Social conflict theorists

Another category of educational historians is the social conflict historians. These historians include elements of both the evolutionary idealists and the social control historians. In particular, social conflict historians agree with the evolutionary idealists in the essential value of school education, but agree with those who adhere to the social control theory in the conviction the kind of education provided for the masses was intended to limit the participation of working-class children in society. Hyams and Bessant's (1972) *Schools for the People?* provides an excellent early representation of a social conflict interpretation of Australian history of school education.

Like the social control historians, the social conflict theorists are concerned with political decision-making underpinning educational change. They are motivated to expose and explain social conflict in school education. As with the social control historians, this concern for decision-making in education brings the social conflict historians to examine the nature of educational change. The history of the Commonwealth's role in Australian school education, potentially, holds much fascination for this group of historians.

Social control historians and the social conflict theorists, but particularly the latter, tended to be suspicious of the educational designs of the political elite controlling the mechanism of government, and the effects of the professed ends of education. They tended to have little faith in altruism, seeing self-interest as the major motivating factor of political power. They are concerned with educational outcomes of political issues. They premised their work on the assumption conflicting interests generate educational issues.

Social control historians, generally, believe the development of the colonial departments of education under the various Education Acts, the development of school education systems growing around these departments, the curricula they instituted, and the practices surrounding the schools need to be seen within the context of differing views and entrenched interests. Therefore, for the social conflict historians, school education needs to be considered as a series of issues emerging amongst groups of all sizes and kinds. The ongoing process of the resolution of these issues is a political activity of debate and negotiation between interested parties, with varying degrees of power: Public education, generally, and the history of the Commonwealth's role in school education, specifically, is the product of political compromise.

Social conflict educational historians are concerned with issues of social justice. Thus, there is a strong sense of moral tone throughout their work. See, for example, the way in which they contend the fate of the less successful in the hands of the educational decision-makers well informs readers about the motives of the decision-makers (Rodwell, 1992a).

As with the social control historians, social conflict historians, are particularly concerned with challenging and revising the received traditions of Australian schooling, as expressed by the evolutionary idealists. My *With Zealous Efficiency* (Rodwell, 1992a) is a revisionist history of Tasmanian education, written in the social conflict paradigm. It explores 'vitalist' and progressive influences on Tasmanian state education for the period 1900-40

and challenged ideas that the Department of Education always was a ‘protector’ of children’s rights, as measured by today’s standards. It stands alone, however, in revisionist accounts of Tasmanian educational history, standing in sharp contrast to Phillips (1985) official and celebratory history of the Tasmanian Department of Education.

Contrasting with social control theory, the social conflict interpretation does not see the establishment of mass state school education as primarily an imposition on the working classes by a bourgeois political elite. Social conflict historians, for example, see the process of the development of mass state-sponsored schooling as being a much more complicated process, essentially involving political compromise, and allowing for the full play of the moral panics on school education policy, something evolutionary idealists are want to deny.

With the social conflict historians, much of the theoretical underpinning for the pedagogical practices and institutional forms mass state-sponsored education took came from bourgeois intellectuals and reformers. This theory, however, also postulated an active and at times, dominant role for at least the advanced elements of Australian working-class society in agitating for, and actually securing, educational provisions. Here, the advanced sections of the working class, far from being thought of as the victims of the politics of public education, are seen as being the propagators of public policies advanced in their own interests. Hence, many developments in school educational have been made under various state, territory and federal Labor governments.

Clark’s *Teaching the Nation* (2006) is a thoughtful social conflict study of Australian school curriculum and provides an excellent example of how governments seek control over children’s knowledge. She used examples, ranging from actions by the Queensland Premier in the late 1970s to ban a social studies program, to Prime Minister Howard’s more recent attempt to control what is taught in schools. The now-disgraced Queensland conservative Premier, Jo Bjelke-Petersen, banned the use of *Man: A Course*

of Study, or *MACOS*, because, *inter alia*, it had come under attack from religious fundamentalists in the United States and Australia for comparing human and animal behaviour, and being premised on evolutionary or Darwinist theories.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In this research, I use CDA as a research tool, in a non-rigorous manner, or as a lens, as distinct from a research methodology. Nevertheless, CDA needs some explanation. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse viewing language as a form of social and political practice. Here, scholars generally argue that (non-linguistic) social/political practices and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Take for example the terms ‘progress’ and ‘reforms’. Although used extensively—and this research will argue, loosely—much care should be taken when using the terms in respect to educational policy, and indeed, any government policy development. These are value-laden terms, and usually are associated with political purpose. What one political party deems as being progress another party may perceived it as being retrograde and backward.

Harris and Marsh (2005, 16) highlighted the use of language as being of significant importance to the study of curriculum development—that is, the way in which the use of language subtly depicts power interplays and positions of authority: ‘Many terms are coupled with “curriculum” to describe or label particular attempts at change. Indeed, the terms “curriculum reform” and “curriculum innovation” suggest very different understandings of, or orientations to, change’. Harris and Marsh (2005, 16) ask us to consider the nature of discourse in its broadest sense, especially ideology in its conscious and unconscious levels, ‘then we must also recognize that the meaning-making process (the discursive process) affects relations of power’. Harris and Marsh (2005) urged a close examination of

words such as ‘reform’ and ‘innovation’. Indeed, understanding the role of language in academic articles, the media and popular discourse is vitally important in understanding power relationships in government school education policy.

Policy as discourse

Bacchi (2000, 46) argued: ‘It is inconsistent to search for a “correct” definition of discourse. In her view, to attempt to provide a definition would ‘contradict the logic of the structure of thought in which the term “discourse” now has a newly powerful critical function’.

So, according to Bacchi (2000), the very act of attempting to define the meaning of the term ‘discourse’ may have political implications, and certainly requires scrutiny. Or as Bacchi (2000, 46) puts it, ‘the whole idea of discourse is that definitions play an important part in delineating *knowledge*’ (emphasis in original). Thus, Bacchi (2000, 46) contended, ‘key terms are finally more important for their place within intellectual practices, than they are for what they may be said to “mean” in the abstract’. Of course, it can be argued, *ipso facto*, the same applies to her argument—that is foreshadowing an examination of Bacchi’s argument for political motive.

Bacchi (2000, 46) then made another important point highly relevant to this study. Given this understanding of the meaning of discourse, she contended those researchers who seek to use CDA in policy analysis, because they themselves become actants in the discourse, ought to state, or reflect upon, their motivation for undertaking the particular research: ‘Policy-as-discourse theorists define “discourse” in ways that accomplish goals they/we deem worthwhile. In the main, policy analysts who described policy-as-discourse have at some level an agenda for change’. For Bacchi (2000, 46), these writers ‘tend to be political progressives, loosely positioned on the left of the political spectrum. They define discourse then in ways that identify what they see to be the constraints on change, while attempting to maintain space for a kind of activism’. Indeed, ‘their primary purpose in invoking discourse

is to draw attention to the meaning making which goes on in legal and policy debates' (Bacchi, 2000, 46).

Bacchi (2000, 46) stated: 'The goal is to illustrate that change is difficult, not only because reform efforts are opposed, but because the ways in which issues get represented have a number of affects that limit the impact of reform gestures'.

Certainly, in undertaking policy research, and while recognising the researcher thus becomes an actant in the discourse Bacchi's (2000, 46) point is very pertinent in this regard. She stated, 'the argument is that issues get represented in ways that mystify power relations and often create individuals responsible for their own "failures", drawing attention away from the structures that create unequal outcomes'. Bacchi (2000, 46) claimed: 'The focus on the ways issues get represented produces a focus on language and on "discourse", meaning the conceptual frameworks available to describe social processes'.

CDA is particularly appealing in this regard. In this setting, Bacchi (2000, 47) claimed: 'Policy-as-discourse analysts have found discourse useful ... in identifying the reasons progressive change has proved so difficult to achieve'. For her, 'this is due ... not simply because opponents of change quash attempts at reform, but because issues get represented in ways that subvert progressive intent. This point is made through drawing attention to the ways in which "social problems" or policy problems get "created" in discourse' (Bacchi, 2000, 47).

With the notion of 'problematization' taken from Foucault (1979), Bacchi (2009) showed how the point that all policies construct the problems to which they proffer putative solutions. This is what Bacchi's (2009) has labelled the WPR (What's the Problem Represented to be? approach, a resource, or tool, intended to facilitate critical interrogation of public policies. Commencing with the premise that what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic (needs to change).

Following this thinking, policies and policy proposals contain implicit representations of what is considered to be the ‘problem’ (i.e., ‘problem representations’). For example, relative to the broad area of this present research represented in this research, this may take the form of the question of how can teaching standards be improved on a national basis to enhance productivity and international competitiveness?

Thus, the task in a WPR analysis is to read policies with an eye to discerning how the ‘problem’ is represented within them and to subject this problem representation to critical scrutiny. This task is accomplished through a set of six questions and an accompanying undertaking to apply the questions to one’s own proposals for change:

- What’s the ‘problem’ (e.g., perceived low teaching standards) represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
- What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the ‘problem’?
- How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?
- What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences?
- Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?
- What effects are produced by this representation of the ‘problem’?
- How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated
- and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?
- Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations. (Bletsas, & Beasley, 2012).

Although not in an exhaustive manner, this present study will seek to adopt this approach as a guiding principle through its analysis of history of Australian school educational policy context.

Kingdon’s model of agenda-setting

In his Foreword to Kingdon’s *Agendas*, Thurber (2003, ix) wrote of the manner in which legislation usually is developed: ‘Students often think policy making is random behaviour and that chaos theory best describes what happens in the agenda-setting process. Kingdon’s model plays well

into these initial biases, but introduces the reader to ‘organised anarchy’ as an explanation of how the policy process works’. Here Thurber’s Foreword to the second edition of *Agendas* underscores the presence of contestation of the politics of policy development and implementation. Kingdon’s model of agenda-setting and policy implementation has gained the attention of theorists for at least three decades since it first appeared in 1984. Indeed, Kingdon received the Aaron Wildavsky Award for *Agendas*, cited as ‘ “an enduring contribution to the study of public policy” ’ (Thurber, 2003, x).

Consider Kingdon’s statements concerning the political drivers of policy agendas. As he argued, ‘the opposition of a powerful phalanx of interest groups makes it difficult—not impossible, but difficult—to contemplate some initiatives’ (Kingdon, 1984/2003, 199). Kingdon (2003, 199) maintains consensus is the binding force of disparate opposing forces and it ‘is built in the political stream by bargaining more than by persuasion’. As he stated, ‘the combination of national mood and elections is a more potent agenda setter than organized interests’. It is because of what Kingdon (1984/2003) stated about ‘national mood’ when explaining the educational policy development and enactment of certain epochs in Australian history, this research evokes a brief description and analysis of the prevailing *zeitgeist* and political dynamic.

To bear out the above point made by Kingdon (1984/2003) we need only look to the way in which Peter Garrett, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, in the second Gillard Government (September 2010-27 June 2013), was required to negotiate in the general spirit of federalism with the many hostile state and territory Coalition governments concerning Gonski funding (E. Griffiths, 2013a).

Instead of looking at how particular programs get put in place, or how political decisions are made, Kingdon (1984/2003) focused on how issues come to the attention of government in the first place, and eventually become policy. Why do some issues get on the agenda on others not? He provided a theory that includes three separate, but loosely coupled

streams—problem, policy, and the political. The problem stream is where particular problems get identified—due to focusing events, changes in indicators, or pressure groups. Academics, researchers, bureaucrats and others that look into the details of various issues dominate the policy stream. Possible specific alternatives for programs are developed in the policy stream. In Australia, the federal government—the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the chief bureaucrats and the visible people in government—dominate the political stream. They help to identify the major issues of political importance, but not the detailed alternatives. Political issues are based on the national mood—the *zeitgeist*, the party in power, and the political dynamics of the particular epoch. Issues get on the decision agenda when all three of these streams come together—usually because a policy entrepreneur has recognized a window of opportunity and brought them together. The strong individual or policy entrepreneur has particular appeal to some. For example, in Chapter Seven we see how Malcolm Skilbeck (2015b), foundation Director of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), argued there were two policy entrepreneurs who were critical in the establishment of the CDC during the last weeks of the Whitlam Government. This is the model in the form of two inflows, and the policy mix. The outflow is the policy. All of this does not happen without the work of committed people (Rodwell, 2016c).

Policy formulation and implementation: clouds or clocks?

What do the critics say? What of policy formulation and implementation—clouds or clocks? Mucciaroni (1992, 460) described how in 1977 Almond and Genco ‘cautioned political scientists about the pitfalls of developing a discipline in the image of the natural sciences’. Moreover, ‘borrowing a metaphor from Karl Popper, they argued that human societies fall somewhere between resembling the irregularity, disorderliness, and unpredictability of “clouds”, at one extreme, and the regularity, orderliness, and predictability of “clocks”, at the other’ (460). While the sciences and social sciences have long abandoned serious discourse on the long-discredited dichotomy, in this instance there is some value in engaging in

the discourse. Perhaps, the process more resembles clouds than clocks, but certainly with some very severe qualifications.

Mucciaroni (1992, 460) went on to argue: ‘Because the ontological properties of political affairs differ from those of physical reality, models and methodologies that insist upon studying political phenomena exclusively as clock-like mechanisms will develop only a limited understanding of them’. Consequently, Mucciaroni (1992, 460) showed how Almond and Genco (1977) called for ‘balancing the search for hard regularities and physicalistic causal relationships with recognition that (1) elements of chance, human creativity, and choice play a crucial role in politics, and (2) most regularities that are found will be “soft” and at relatively low levels of generalization’. Certainly, not quite in tune with chaos theory, but certainly what Kingdon (1984/2003) would term ‘ordered chaos’.

This is a worldview, a *weltanschauung*, in sympathy with the historiography of this research, as is outlined in Chapter Three. But how does it square with Kingdon’s model of policy enactment and implementation? This model, often labelled as the ‘garbage can’ model conceives of government as an ‘organized anarchy’, conjuring up the image of a system manifesting both order and disorder.

At this point in our analysis it is worth remembering Kingdon (1984/2003) and later, Mucciaroni (1992) were writing at about the time of the emergence of chaos theory, and the consequent repudiation of determinism or scientific reductionism (see, e.g., Byrne, 1998). During the decade following, and through to the time of the writing of this research, chaos theory has become much more widely accepted by researchers in the social sciences. Kingdon’s *Agendas*, however, eschews any notions of chaos theory simply by ignoring it.

Mucciaroni (1992, 460) further explained the Kingdon (1984/2003) model: ‘A problem becomes salient when a crisis or ‘focusing event’ attracts

attention to it, or when widely respected social indicators signal a change'. Indeed, 'solutions refer to "the gradual accumulation of knowledge and perspectives among specialists in any given area" and the generation and diffusion of policy proposals by them'. Moreover, 'the political environment is constantly undergoing change, which facilitates or blocks problems and solutions from getting on the agenda. "Swings of national mood, vagaries of public opinion, election results, changes of administration turn over in Congress" [or parliament] may be relevant, as well as other kinds of political change' (Kingdon, 1984, 93, as cited in Mucciaroni, 1992, 460).

Consider the flux of educational policy during the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government. Briefly and simplistically, according to Kingdon's model how did the Gonski funding model become policy in late days of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government, and then become drastically modified during the early days of the Abbott-Turnbull Government? Exactly, how can politicians affect how a particular policy gains public attention, and how might a sense of crisis improve the chances of an idea becoming policy? What is the role of manufactured crisis associated with moral panics, or the wider implications of a 'risk society' as postulated by Beck (1992) and Giddens (1999), especially in connection with the rising influence of social media?

Globalisation and risk society

This study will demonstrate the benefits of using Kingdon's *Agendas* as a lens to examine the history of Commonwealth leverage on Australian school education. Moreover, it will pose many questions of the need to develop Kingdon's theories in terms of moral panic theory and risk society theory. These social constructs appear to suggest new pressures on that part of the theory which elucidates the windows of opportunity for policy development and enactment.

Beck (1992) postulated society on the edge—catastrophes at every turn, 'Chernobles' and 'Fukasheemas', pandemics and rapidly developing climate change. Beck's view of risk society is essentially catastrophic; we are living on the 'volcano of civilization' in which exceptional conditions threaten to

become the norm—it is as if Fukasheema, or perhaps a worst-case scenario of a worldwide swiftly increasing climate change, uncertain political times—revolving doors in political leadership, and a vastly increased percentage of swinging voters—exemplifies his understanding of risk society: ‘Catastrophes that touch the vital nerves of society in a context of highly developed bureaucratic safety and welfare arouse the sensationalist greed of the mass media, threaten markets, make sales prospects unpredictable, devalue capital and set streams of voters in motion (Beck, 1992a, 116, as cited in Cottle, 1989, 20). But just how much veracity is there in this view of society?’

Nearly twenty years ago, Cottle (1989, 20) was cautious in his evaluation of Beck’s theory of risk society. ‘Beck talks of a catastrophic “risk society” in which the scale and magnitude of the risks are such that civilization is permanently and seemingly ineluctably under threat’. For sure, ‘Beck has strong grounds to warrant his chosen focus of concern, but is this sufficient to recast our view of society?’ Do all risks need to be accompanied by global catastrophes? Or as Cottle (1989, 20) puts it: ‘Is it not also the case that environmental problems and other risks encompass less than the globally catastrophic? Those more mundane, low level, small-scale, local and less than life-threatening concerns are also very much the stuff of environmental discourse and media representation’. Indeed, for Cottle (1989, 20) an answer lies in the powerful influence of the media: ‘The cultural resonance of the environment, as discussed, is such that in combination with the growing populist nature of the media (including the TV news media) we are all bombarded daily with a never-ending stream of images and ideas, protests and celebrations, that endorse an environmental sensibility’ (also, see Rodwell, 2017b).

The growing influence of social media on moral panic theory and Kingdom’s *Agendas*.

Béland and Howlett (2016, 222) wrote how Kingdon (1984) suggested ‘window openings could sometimes be triggered by apparently unrelated external focusing events, such as crises, accidents, or the presence or

absence of “policy entrepreneurs” both within and outside of governments.’ While these policy windows may be opened by institutionalized events, ‘such as periodic elections or budget deadlines’, or indeed moral panics may serve the same purpose. Kingdon (1984, 21) argued: ‘Windows are opened either by the appearance of compelling problems or by happenings in the political stream’. These policy entrepreneurs ‘are responsible not only for prompting important people to pay attention, but also for coupling solutions to problems and for coupling both problems and solutions to politics’ (p. 21, as cited in Béland and Howlett, 2016, 222-223).

As Béland and Howlett (2016, 223) confirm: ‘Policy Entrepreneurs play an important role in shaping the course of the three streams and their intersection by linking or “coupling” policy problems and policy solutions together with political opportunities.’ Moral panics provide these opportunities, and are becoming increasingly common in Australian school education (Rodwell, 2016a; Rodwell, 2017b).

Moral panic paradigm underwent massive changes with the advent of social or participatory media, such as Facebook and Twitter during the early twenty-first century, so much so that national academic conferences were given over to interrogating these influences (Participatory media and moral panic, 2015). How does this influence Kingdon’s *Agendas*, especially in relation to the window of opportunity for policy development and enactment? Consider how this window of opportunity can be prematurely prised open through an orchestrated moral panic brought on by social media. Indeed, the transformation of the media landscape invited researchers to, ‘rethink the dialectic between “media” and “moral panic”, by focusing on the ways in which participatory media enables the public’s participation in moral panic’ (Participatory media and moral panic, 2015, n.p.). Although with research centring on environmental policy, Cullen-Knox, et al (2016) make the same point.

According to the Social Media and Society Conference held in Toronto, Canada in July 2015, ‘the co-production of moral panic, via media

participation, can be analyzed to document how individuals, through their relational links, trigger, maintain and propagate moral panic or how these forms of moral regulation affect sociability, notably those stigmatized by the controversial subject' (n.p.). This cast new light on 'how mediatization of social relations, stemming from participatory media, leads to renegotiating a number of democratic balances. These include the relationship between private and public spheres as well as the role of publics in constituting collective dynamics, such as the formation of public problems' (n.p.). These dynamics will become much clearer when this research brings into focus the role of social media in the moral panics surrounding, for example the moral panics of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd and Abbott-Turnbull years. Kingdon's *Agendas* may require some tweaking to take into account the social media phenomena, whereby the windows of opportunity for legislation may be hastened significantly by this new form of media, as indeed, it does with the accompanying idea of the risk society, and often associated with moral panics.

Understanding the Goldilocks condition

Critical to Kingdon's theory is what could be termed the Goldilocks condition, when conditions are just right for the policy to proceed from an idea to an agenda item on the table. For Kingdon (1984/2003, 36), these 'policy windows' often open only for a short time when conditions are right, is the precondition for getting a matter on the agenda. The three streams of problems, solutions, and politics must come together under suitable and conducive conditions. According to Mucciaroni (1992, 460), 'because change in each stream takes place largely independent from changes in the others, what gets on the agenda depends upon fortuitous timing'. Thus, 'if the problem is not salient, and/or a solution is not available, and/or political conditions are inhospitable, it will not get on the agenda'.

At this stage in the policy mix, individual(s) come into play—most commonly politicians, or senior policy advisors, such as those referred to above by Skilbeck (2015b). For Mucciaroni (1992, 460), 'there must be deliberate efforts to seize the opportunity and push the 'policy entrepreneurs'

highly knowledgeable, committed individuals in or out of government who are willing to invest their resources to join the streams together’.

Kingdon’s model and educational policy

In research close to the purpose of this research, Hinz (2010) examined influence of federalism on school funding and policymaking using Kingdon’s *Agendas*. This research is based on a detailed study of the Victorian government’s ‘Schools of the Future’ (SOTF) initiatives (1992/1999), devolving ninety-three per cent of the state government’s public education budget to individual schools, effectively allowing schools to govern themselves within a state accountability framework. Hinz (2010) researched the policy-making process with reference to Commonwealth and intergovernmental influences. The research challenged recurrent critiques of Australian federalism, finding SOTF best corresponds with the coordinate view of federalism, more reminiscent of the Whitlam and Fraser Years (1972-83) as described in Chapter Seven of this research. As with the research methodology of this research, Hinz’s (2010) research was based upon original data and documents from government and non-government bodies, complemented by interviews with key policy makers, triangulated against secondary literature, and analysed qualitatively in a conceptual framework drawing upon variants of institutionalism and Kingdon’s policy streams framework.

Moreover, again at a state level, Rodwell (2011a) illustrated the relevance and usefulness of Kingdon’s *Agendas* in explaining contested policies in Tasmanian Post-secondary Education: 2007-2010.

Panic, manufactured panic and Kingdon’s model

Using Stanley Cohen’s moral panic theory, in an article on one newspaper’s role in the demise of a statewide curriculum (Rodwell, 2011b), I demonstrated how Tasmania’s premier newspaper, the News Corporation media’s Hobart *Mercury* manufactured a deep sense of moral panic associated with the Essential Learnings (ELs) Curriculum (2000-2006). This resulted in considerable electoral damage for the Labor Government at the

March 2006 election. Although Labor did not lose any seats, it came dreadfully close in the southern seat of Franklin, where Minister for Education, Paula Wriedt hung on ‘by the skin of her teeth’. Consequently, Premier Paul Lennon replaced Wriedt in her Education portfolio and ‘brought the curtain down’ on the existing ELs Curriculum. The Liberal Opposition, who found it politically advantageous to oppose ELs, found a strong ally in *The Mercury*, thus ending an educational policy. How do these events connect with Kingdon’s model?

Moral panic theory is just that: a social construct—an idea—developed to explain a certain social phenomena. Moral panics, or manufactured panics, either by political parties and/or the media, can alter drastically Kingdon’s three-stream policy mix by convincing the voting public a particular policy is not warranted, or on the other hand, is urgently needed. Elections are important ingredients in this process.

Moral panic theory has existed at least as long as the work by Cohen’s (1972/2002) which did much to popularise its influence in society and culture. It has undergone some changes since. The idea of manufactured crises soon found expression in school education policy. Berliner and Biddle (1996) wrote on the way in which manufactured crises could twist the discourse on public education. They begin by looking to works such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), a report commissioned by American President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education. Its publication is considered a landmark event in modern American educational history. Among other things, the report contributed to the ever-growing assertion American schools were failing, touching off a wave of local, state, and federal reform efforts. Not so, argued Berliner and Biddle (1996) whose research showed the facts did not support any evidence of falling standards in education. Rather, researchers should be looking to the political motivation behind the writing of such reports. Such a line of thinking also should begin by looking to such politically motivated works such as Kevin Donnelly’s *Benchmarking Australian Primary School Curricula* (2005) and

his *Dumbing Down: Outcomes-based and Politically Correct: the Impact of the Culture Wars on Our Schools* (2007)

Associated research looked to the way in which national high-stakes testing can generate a sense of crises. Nichols and Berliner (2007) showed how for more than a decade, the debate over high-stakes testing dominated the field of education. The authors documented and categorized the ways high-stakes testing threatens the purposes and ideals of the American educational system. Their analysis is grounded in the application of Campbell's Law, which posits the greater the social consequences associated with a quantitative indicator—such as test scores—the more likely it is the indicator itself will become corrupted and the more likely it is the use of the indicator will corrupt the social processes it was intended to monitor. Of equal value as the data obtained from the national testing regime, will be an examination of the political motives underpinning the policies of national testing. Witness, the Australian Government's National Assessment Plan: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) Testing program.

SMH journalist, David Marr's (2011) *Panic* is a more recent addition to the literature on manufactured crises. Essentially a collection of his journalism, the book argued that often aided by media 'shock jocks' and the mainstream media itself, the manipulation of fear is a central tool in the modern political process, and its effect has been unambiguously corrosive. However, Marr (2011) showed the right-wing of Australian politics is not alone in this endeavour: At times Labor has been adroit in this.

Moral panic is not a homogeneous theory, and to link it universally with Kingdon's model may prove problematic. In his blog, Dr_Tad (2012, n.p.) argued: Marr 'fails to differentiate between classic moral panics (e.g., over individual drug use)—designed to regulate behaviour and mobilise state authority against 'folk devils'—and the mobilisation of fear as part of wider political projects'. To illustrate this point, Dr_Tad (2012, n.p.) looked to Howard's Wik response, arguing it, 'was not primarily about creating political advantage—it was part of a strategy to defend the property rights of

powerful business interests’. Dr_Tad (2012, n.p.) also insisted: ‘Marr is also unable to clarify the difference between panics that win social consensus against their targets and culture wars where contesting claims are made around representations of threat’. Consequently, in this research, while there is a drive to connect panic theory to Kingdon’s model, it will need to be done with some qualification and care.

Critcher (2008, 3) postulated two basic types of models for moral panics. First, he referred to Cohen (1972) as what he terms ‘a processual model’. The second, derived from the more recent work of Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (1994), he referred to ‘as an attributional model’. Moreover, for Critcher (2008, 3), ‘these two models generate clusters of questions around their processes or attributes. These are designed to be applied to any case study of a possible moral panic. The question for me is not, ‘does this example prove that moral panics exist?’ but ‘how useful is it to apply moral panic analysis to this case?’ Following the same reasoning, this present research has much more to say concerning both models.

The burning fuse of politics

Politics provides a burning fuse linking social conflict theory, federalism, and Kingdon’s (2003) model. At critical points in this research, there is an engagement in some analysis of these three principal theoretical elements. With its emphasis on educational policy being the outcome of political moment and compromise, social conflict theory is well suited to providing additional theoretical explanation to critical federal educational intervention in school education. Particularly appealing is the emphasis social conflict theory places on political motivation.

Theoretical explanation is critically important to this research. It is primarily a history of the politics of Commonwealth engagement in school education; consequently, it seeks not only to account for what occurred, but also offers some theoretical explanation of why these changes in school education occurred in the complex web of federalism.

Analysis and conclusions

As will become clearer in the following chapters, for the purposes of this research, the social conflict paradigm of historical analysis is a powerful historiographical model for the history of Commonwealth involvement in school education as conceived in this research. This, however, is not to denigrate the other paradigms of historical analysis. They all serve a different purpose. What researchers should bear in mind when they are using these sources, are the motives behind the writing of such a work, and the audience for whom the work is intended. For example, a celebratory history—usually, a subset of the evolutionary idealist paradigm—is simply that. It seeks to celebrate a particular event, and institution, or period in history.

This research conceives of educational change as being the result of chaotic, individual, political and social imperatives. This is not to contend *progress* in education, as in history generally, is a fallacious concept. An increased role of the Commonwealth in school education may well be perceived as progress for many people, while for others it may be conceived of as being retrograde.

CHAPTER THREE

The Kaleidoscope of Australian Federalism

Introduction

The processes of Australian federalism are constantly changing. This chapter seeks to illustrate how academics, journalists and thoughtful politicians are drawn to examining these changes. A history of Australian federalism reveals a story of shifting federalism, policy-making, politics and power, an analysis of which assists in understanding federal-state relations in school education.

The Australian Constitution was drawn up at the end of the nineteenth century. Over a hundred years later, the Victorian Labor Premier, John Brumby in his keynote address to the 2008 Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) conference asked the question: Does federalism continue to work? His response: ‘In a word, yes. Federalism does work. It is a robust and flexible system that has stood the test of time and made us one of the world’s most stable democracies’ (Brumby, 2008, n.p.).

Brumby (2008, n.p.) also emphasised: ‘It would be a mistake to confuse the Commonwealth’s fiscal power with constitutional power’. He referred to Sir Henry Winneke, the former Governor and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, who said in 1965, ‘as a consequence of our federal way of life, based as it is upon a division of powers between Commonwealth and state, there is no absolute sovereignty in Australia’. It is all a matter of each government—Commonwealth or state or territory—negotiating a particular

policy. For Brumby (2008, n.p.), ‘no Australian government operates in isolation. Every Australian government—be they state or territory or Commonwealth—has an equal share in our federation’.

Thus, as this research alluded to in Chapter One, while many researchers and commentators might decry the fact, it is the third element of federalism, that of politics, providing the grease for the daily grind of federalism—its political dimension, and the horse-trading and so on that goes on between the Commonwealth and the states and territories as common ground for policies and financial arrangements are determined.

Yet, legal elements—for example, some High Court rulings on school education—also stir thoughtful commentators, and have marked and long-standing effects on what happens in Australia’s schools.

The financial side of federalism is apparent starkly in May of each year at the time of the handing down of the Federal Budget. This resulted in 2014 in a media frenzy as Treasurer Joe Hockey travelled around the country participating in horse-trading with Cross Bench Senators, seeking support for the Budget. These kinds of negotiations also occur at other times when the Federal Minister for Education seeks support with state and territory Premiers and Ministers for Education. Witness the deals done for ‘Gonski funding’ by the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government described in chapters nine and ten.

Federalism’s three-layered strata

Davies (2007) drew attention to Sir Robert Menzies’ (1967) *Central Power in the Australian Commonwealth*. Here, Menzies adopted labels coined by James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce, (1838-1922) British academic, jurist, historian and Liberal politician who had described the two forces operating in a federation—centripetal and the centrifugal forces (Bryce, 1888). Both Bryce and Menzies may have been motivated to use these terms because of the ostensible impression conveying the certainty, normally associated with the physical sciences. Centripetal forces draw power to the centre—the

Commonwealth—while centrifugal forces attract towards the states and territories.

Davies (2007) showed how Menzies (1967), ‘contended these forces are constantly competing against each other, and the balance between them is never static. Not surprisingly, his view in 1967 was the centripetal forces had well and truly predominated during the previous 66 years of Federation. As Davies (2007) stated, Menzies’ conclusions forty years later seems even more obvious. However, Davies (2007, 2) demonstrated how in a federation these centripetal and centrifugal forces are at a tension at three different levels. First, the legal level, ‘which describes the constitutional structures which determine the federal balance ... at this level ... the most profound changes have occurred. It is also the most influential level, as it sets the boundaries within which the other two levels can operate’. Secondly, there is the financial level, these days embodying the relative financial powers of the Commonwealth over the states and territories, increasingly involving “vertical fiscal imbalance” with which the states have had to contend for most of their existence since Federation’ (Davies, 2007, 2). Of course, in Davies’ (2007, 2) words: ‘It goes without saying that, as more financial power has passed to the Commonwealth, more political power has generally followed, though this has not always been, and need not always be, the case’. Then there is the third level of federalism—the political level. With no reference in the Constitution to political parties, for Davies (2007) this is the level manifesting itself in the contest between states and territories and the Commonwealth as to who should do what. At this level, however, there are boundaries for the political dynamics. In Davies’ (2007, 2) words: ‘Whilst the boundaries within which the political contest takes place on this level are determined by constitutional and financial constraints, this political contest can, on its own, significantly alter the federal balance in practice’. Consequently, it is the political element of federalism most often in the news.

After several decades of self-government, the Australian British colonies came together in 1901 as the Commonwealth of Australia. The Australian

Founding Fathers—the Framers—influenced strongly by precedents in the United States, but nevertheless, sympathetic to the demands of Westminster, designed a strongly federalist constitution, with the Federal Government holding few enumerated powers. Overwhelmingly endorsed by the Australian people at the referendum of 1900—passed with a majority of people in a majority of states—the Constitution reserved the vast bulk of political authority for the states.

Through Westminster imperatives, while eschewing a presidential system of government and a comprehensive Bill of Rights, the Constitutional Framers used some of the federal features of the American system. These features included a high degree of autonomy for the government institutions of the federation and the states. As is explained below in this chapter, the six states had achieved much since self-government and were not prepared to hand these over to the Commonwealth. Moreover, the provision of the judicial authority of the High Court ensured a division of power between these jurisdictions, and was entrusted with legislation to determine whether either level of government had exceeded its powers.

Education and the Australian Constitution

Having expended so much money, time and energy in developing the public instruction acts and subsequently implementing so-called reforms, there is little doubt early twentieth-century state governments contemplated any Commonwealth involvement in their systems of schooling, and there is no evidence of the topic being discussed at least at the 1891 Constitutional Convention which took place in Sydney (Official Report, 1891). School education was not on the agenda for the Founding Fathers. Yet, elsewhere, Sir Henry Parkes, a prominent Founding Father, had much to say about school education and national purpose (Barcan, 1965, 106-110; 1980, 143-144). This, however, was solely the responsibility of individual Ministers of Public Instruction. Very soon after the colonies federated, the Commonwealth was involved directly in school education.

Indeed, the Australian colonial governments has achieved much in the decades following self-government and prior to federation, as will be attested by the history of their respective departments of public instruction (Barcan, 1965, 1980; 1988; Hyams & Bessant, 1972). This point has relevance for this research insofar as a point made by the principal author of the Australian Constitution and later Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Sir Samuel Griffith, and stated at the Constitutional Conventions. The Australian colonies had been, ‘accustomed for so long to self-government’ they had ‘become practically almost sovereign states’ (Paul, n.d., n.p.). As such, therefore, following Federation, the separate states continued as autonomous bodies ‘surrendering only so much of their power as is necessary to the establishment of a general government to do for them collectively what they cannot do for themselves’ (Paul, n.d., n.p.). Federal powers were to be limited—defence, immigration, interstate commerce, lighthouses, and so forth—and there was almost no interference by the Commonwealth in state affairs during the period 1901 through to the Great War, except for providing leadership and organisation for school cadets. As it was, this interference provided much massive disruption to school life.

Historical phases of Australian federalism

The major historical phases, or epochs, of federalism in Australia are not neatly cut, often overlapping and at times quite arbitrarily defined. Most importantly, they should be seen in relation to the major international occurrences of the time.

Coordinated Federalism—the Federation of the Australian colonies, a looming War and its aftermath (1901-19)

The first phase of federalism is often described as coordinated federalism. In this phase the Commonwealth and the states were both financially and politically independent within their own spheres of responsibility. Hinz (2011, n.p.) defined coordinate federalism as a ‘clear division of powers, little or no overlap in government activities, so they mostly operate independently (e.g., Canada)’.

This is what the Framing Fathers intended, however, with the shock waves set off by the surprising victory of the Japanese over the Russian Empire—18 February 1904-5 September 1905—the first great war of the twentieth century, then with the growing international tensions leading to the Great War, federalism was undergoing changes. This research addresses this topic in Chapter Four, especially in the manner in which the dominant socio-cultural socio-economic *zeitgeist* of the day impacted on school education.

Imperatives generated through defence affected the Commonwealth's relationship with the states in respect to school cadets and school education during this early period. Through the *Defence ACT (1903)* under Section 51 xxix and the subsequent regulations of the Commonwealth Cadet Corps (1907) military cadets became compulsory for all boys age twelve to eighteen years in Australian schools.

Cooperative Federalism—the efficiency dynamic: the progressive years (1919-39)

The University of New South Wales Centre of Public Law defines co-operative federalism as: 'The sharing of law-making powers between the Commonwealth and state governments ... both levels of government ... work[ing] together to achieve good policy outcomes. This approach to governance ... can be seen in a range of policy areas, including health, education and rivers management' (UNSW Centre of Public Law, n.d., n.p.).

This was the dominant form of federalism during the interwar period. In response to national imperatives during the period—usually expressed by historians as a quest for national efficiency and fitness (Roe, 1984). In regard to federal leverage on school education it meant the establishment of federal ministerial councils whereby under cooperative arrangements programs were provided for the states and territories, examples being the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the National Fitness Council (NFC) and the Australian Education Council (AEC).

Much neglected in the historiography of school education in the federalist context, these ministerial councils brought long-term major influences on Australian school education (Rodwell, 2016b). The NHMRC was instrumental in medicalising aspects of the Australian school curriculum during the interwar period, in respect to early childhood education, primary education and aspects of secondary education, in particular physical education and domestic science for adolescent girls. The ACER spearheaded psychological testing as a mainstay of the influence of scientific management on school education. The NFC also assisted in the medicalization of the states' physical education curricula, generally providing leadership in establishing the professionalization of physical education as a discipline (Connell, 1980).

Now carrying the nomenclature of Australian Education Council (AEC), following the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC), the AEC is a forum comprising federal and state Ministers of Education assisted by a standing committee of Directors of Education. The chair rotates annually. To the extent this group pool their powers and act in a concerted manner to dominate direction setting in education, they constitute an oligarchy.

Pragmatic Federalism: Postwar Imperatives and the Menzies years, Coalition Governments (1949-72)

In an address to the Australian Senate, Professor Greg Craven (2005, 4-5) stated: 'Australia's conservatives historically have understood and accepted federalism as a means of achieving their fundamental goals of dividing power, making power accountable, separating power, and limiting power'. Moreover, Menzies and his ilk 'have been temperamentally supportive of federalism, even when they found it irritating'. Consequently, for Craven (2005, 5) this meant: 'While conservative governments might on particular occasions succumb to the political temptation to violate federalism, they would struggle against doing so ... monumental compromise between federalism and pragmatism'. 'Sir Robert Menzies was a good example of

this tendency', Craven concluded.

According to the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP, n.d., n.p.), 'pragmatic federalism is characterised by a direct engagement or confrontation with pressing problems, an engagement unmediated by larger theoretical concerns'. Moreover, Australian federalism 'has always lacked an underlying "grand theory" or close link to the ideology of either political party, rather it is one best characterised as political problem solving'. In practice, 'this may take the form of increased centralism ... or increased cooperation between the centre and the periphery' (JCIPP, n.d., n.p.).

Throughout the Menzies and Coalition governments, the cold war severely challenged Australia. But there were also traditional wars—Korea (1950-53), the Malaysia Emergency (1963-66) and Vietnam (1962-75). Set against this were major confrontations between the Soviet Union and the United States, for example the Cuban Missile Crisis (May 1962). While the 'reds under the beds' scare and the 'domino' theory of the period seem a little over the top today, during the period in question they provided real national anguish. At home, particularly in Victoria and Tasmania, preference votes from the Catholic supported the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) were essential in maintaining Conservative majorities in state and federal parliaments. Chapter Seven will detail how this *zeitgeist* and political dynamic were manifested in Commonwealth engagement in school education (McLean, 2001; Bolton, 2005).

Coordinative Federalism and treading softly—the Whitlam and Fraser Years (1972-83)

Sometimes called collaborative or cooperative federalism, this form of federalism is best exemplified during the Whitlam governments and the following Fraser governments. Using research by Cameron and Simeon (2002), the JCIPP defined this form of federalism as the process by which, 'national goals are achieved, not by the federal government acting alone or by the federal government shaping provincial [or State and Territory] behaviour through the exercise of its spending power, but by some or all of

the 11 [Canadian] governments and the territories acting collectively' (Collaborative/Cooperative Federalism, n.d., n.p.).

As will be demonstrated in Chapter Eight with the newly established Australian Schools Commission (ASC) and the Whitlam and Fraser governments, it is important to note there was no agreed position upon just how the respective governments should collaborate. However, following Saunders' (2002) Australian-focused research, the JCIPP (n.d.), contended it is possible to discern some of the characteristics of collaborative federalism in the Australian context, including roles of coordination, harmonisation, financial assistance, the provision of ministerial councils and inter-governmental agreements, formalising arrangements between the Commonwealth and states and territories (Collaborative/Cooperative Federalism, n.d., n.p.).

Labor Prime Minister Whitlam's centralist 'new federalism' attempted to extend Commonwealth influence to new areas. By contrast, conservative Prime Minister Fraser's new federalism emphasised 'state rights' (Gillespie, 1994). Changes to the nature of coordinative federalism under the Fraser Government following the Whitlam sacking of 1975, were significant. With the conservative-dominated states and territories resenting what they perceived to be their loss of authority, Fraser put into effect a new policy of coordinative federalism. The outcome was an agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories in which both levels of government agreed to a system of co-operative planning and decision-making (Hinz, 2011, n.p.).

In particular, a reading of the paper by Professor Ken McKinnon, first Chairman of the ASC (1973-81), in Chapter Seven illustrates the close connect of the work and achievements of the ASC with the research contained in the above JCIPP article.

Corporate Federalism: the Hawke and Keating years (1983-96)

For Fitzgerald (2014, n.p.), ‘the standout period for this form of federalism was the Hawke-Keating term of government, producing the National Competition Policy, the east coast power grid, a national rail agreement, harmonised regulation and consumer standards, and mutual recognition of many policies and occupations’. What was the nature of Hawke’s and Keating’s brand of ‘corporate federalism’?

First, there is no clear agreement on the nomenclature for the type of federalism for this period. Corporate federalism is the label Lingard (1991) prefers, and one with which this research will stay. ‘Corporate federalism extended the application of neocorporatist strategies for managing and responding to crisis—here, in particular, Australia’s worsening national and international economic situation—from the private to the public sector (Lingard, O’Brien & Knight, 1993, 235). Munro (2001) preferred the label ‘new federalism’. Along with Lingard (1991), this research argues for the term ‘corporate federalism’ because of its emphasis on the corporate world, economic rationalism and globalism, emerging influences during this period.

Hinz (2011) more recently has preferred the term ‘cooperative federalism’ for the Hawke-Keating era, defining the period as featuring:

1. More consensual approach, joint decision-making, closer partnership towards shared goals
2. New institutions: COAG and Ministerial Councils
3. National Competition Policy, national standards

For Hinz (2011), Keating was:

1. More willing to override the states when deemed necessary, for example, the Native Title legislation, yet,
2. Tied grants grew, but there was a continuation of many Hawke innovations, and of dual federalism with joint and separate activities.

However, Hinz (2011, n.p.) stated Hawke's, 'cooperative federalism' has been interpreted in many different ways'.

Munro (2001, n.p.) contended: 'In the last decade or so, much discussion focussed on the Hawke and Keating governments' new federalism, which began with the Special Premiers' Conference called by Prime Minister Hawke in 1990'. Indeed, the primary aim at this conference was to pursue 'micro-economic reform' through cooperation between the Commonwealth and the states (Painter 1998, 31). However, federal-state-territory financial relations were a major concern for the states, according to Munro (2001, 11), as 'being described by then state premiers John Bannon and Wayne Goss as the "core" or "fundamental" questions'. The Hawke and Keating governments' approach did not resolve this issue. This was so, probably because this issue defies a solution, as demonstrated by subsequent attempts by various governments.

Supply-Side Federalism: Private School Education: the Howard Years (1996-2007)

How did the long years of the Howard Government alter federalism? This research will label the kind of federalism under Howard as 'supply-side federalism', as used by researchers such as Knight and Warry (1996). Essentially, supply-side federalism entails relationships between the Commonwealth, the states and territories providing incentives to stimulate business growth. In the US, President Reagan was the great champion of this (Knight & Warry, 1996).

Under Howard's leadership, supply-side federalism was shaped to account for freeing up the system to encourage free enterprise, thus allowing a greater play of market forces in shaping their future form and direction. A corollary of this was an increase in support for private schools, and a means to move public debt to the private sector.

Early in the history of the Howard Government, Knight and Warry (1996, 8) commented supply-side federalism formed: 'The Coalition's approach to

labour market policy, industrial relations and enterprise bargaining is more “extreme” or more “logical”, depending on one’s point of view, while its hostility to the trade union movement clearly demarcates it from the Labor position’.

‘Related to this goal’, according to Knight and Warry (1996, 8), ‘was the election commitment to reduce the current account and budget deficits, which had blown out under the previous government, thus improving the nation’s economic standing’. With a stark pointer to what was to occur under the Abbot-Turnbull Government of (2013-), ‘on achieving office, the new regime “discovered” an \$18billion “black hole” deficit, which has since been used to justify its failure to implement a number of its election promises, including some in higher education’ (8). ‘Some’, indeed! The year following Knight and Warry’s (1996) paper, the Australian schools, colleges and universities were gutted of funds, with only private schools and colleges benefitting (Robinson, 2013).

While Chapter Nine of this research demonstrates there was an increase in Commonwealth engagement with the states and territories during the Howard years, generally, it was a case of the Commonwealth supplying the ideology and the states and territories supplying the funds, particularly for public schooling.

Enter ‘Risk Society’: National Curriculum and the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd, Abbott-Turnbull Years (2007-15)

Payne (2010, n.p.), a panel member of ABC’s *The Drum*, and future Turnbull Government Minister for Defence, declared: ‘Much like the transition from colonies to Commonwealth, federalism in Australia has been at times an acrimonious affair’. But help was at hand: ‘In 2007, Kevin [Rudd] from Queensland told us he was “here to help”. He promised to end the blame game, the buck would stop with him, and Australia would enter a new phase of ‘co-operative federalism’ (n.p.). Indeed, ‘COAG would be the vehicle in which Kevin and the state Labor premiers would fundamentally transform Federal-State relations. As one of his first major acts as Prime

Minister, Mr Rudd announced COAG would sit more regularly, an ambitious new reform agenda was agreed to and the role and functions of the COAG Reform Council were to be expanded' (Payne, 2010, n.p.).

For Payne (2010, n.p.), however, 'two years on and COAG under Kevin from Queensland has ground to a halt' (n.p.). Indeed, state and territory governments and their respective departments were 'the victims of an overloaded agenda. Productivity, health, water and education reforms have all stalled'. This mirrored the dysfunction within the Rudd Government.

I have labelled the form of federalism generated by the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government, and then the Abbott-Turnbull Government as 'expansionist corporate federalism'. It was corporate in the sense as was that of the Howard Government, but particularly in the case of the former, it was hastily expansionist, given the qualifications outlined below in regard to the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

How do researchers and academics assess Rudd's return to so-called cooperative federalism? Anderson and Parkin (2010, n.p.) argued: 'Over its long history, the Australian Labor Party has had a complicated and sometimes inconsistent engagement with federalism'. Moreover, 'the Rudd Labor government, over its truncated lifespan of less than three years, earned itself a special place in this history by embodying and projecting many elements of this complicated inconsistency'.

Well intended in respect to school education, and with a forced pace brought on by the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), the Rudd and Gillard governments worked on many fronts, and at a frantic pace. This theme will be pursued in greater depth in Chapter Ten of this research. Some may argue, possibly a more powerful force than the GFC was the impact of 'risk society' on Australian schooling. Indeed, some commentators (e.g., Kostogriz, 2011) even have argued in respect to the development of national school curricula and the safeguarding of everything Australian, it has parallels with such

extreme policies as border protection enforced by the governments during this period.

With his massive majority from the September 2013 election, many observers of federalism may have wondered where Tony Abbott would lead the nation. He had learnt much from the old *maestro*, John Howard. First, any ‘responsible’ government would need to attend to the budget deficit, which on closer examination was even larger than first thought. Days following Treasurer Joe Hockey handing down his first budget in May 2014, Lynch (2014, n.p.) wrote in *The Conversation*: ‘When treasurer Joe Hockey detailed his first budget on Tuesday, the announcement the states and territories were to be stripped of A\$80 billion in federal health and education funding agreed to with the previous government was undoubtedly the biggest surprise’. Lynch (2014, n.p.) reminded his readers: ‘Earlier this decade, state premiers railed at the centralisation occurring under the banner of “cooperative federalism” flown by the federal Labor government’. Moreover, Lynch (2014, n.p.) continued during the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd years, ‘there was much talk of the “dysfunctional” nature of COAG. There was also a yearning for less agreement and reporting against national benchmarks, and more local control and diversity in the service of ‘competitive federalism’.

Lynch (2014, n.p.) asserted: ‘Those complaints were not without foundation’. Indeed, ‘in the budget’s aftermath’, Lynch (2014, n.p.) continued, ‘state premiers could be forgiven for having a pang of nostalgia about how good they really had it’. Indeed, for Lynch (2014, n.p.), ‘it is now apparent that prime minister Tony Abbott’s approach to federal-state relations is also pretty “competitive”. In fact, try no-holds-barred—the political equivalent of a bout of mixed martial arts’.

The Government decided on a White Paper to detail the so-called ‘reforms’ of federation. In commenting on the announcement of the terms of reference for the Commonwealth’s White Paper on the Reform of Federation (Prime Minister of Australia, 2014) Grattan (2014, n.p.) wrote: ‘The Abbott

Government's strong preference for limiting the role of Canberra and boosting that of the states is a central thrust in the terms of reference for the white paper on reforming the federation'. One of the terms of references included, 'the practicalities of limiting Commonwealth policies and funding to core national interest matters' (n.p.). The paper also looked at reducing or, if appropriate, eliminating overlap between local, state and Commonwealth involvement in delivering and funding programs. Clearly, education funding was in the firing line. Grattan (2014, n.p.) concluded her report by stating: 'Among the issues considered will be achieving agreement between state and federal governments about their 'distinct and mutually exclusive responsibilities and funding sources'. So, it was back to the future! John Howard's notions of federalism reigned strongly over the Abbott-Turnbull Government.

Federalism's legal and constitutional elements regarding education

Apart from the addition to Section 51 xxiii from the successful 1946 referendum and the 'benefits to students' phrase, Section 51 outlines the powers of the Commonwealth. School education is not mentioned in Section 51. Thus, the Constitution declares:

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:

- trade and commerce...
- taxation...
- bounties...
- borrowing money...
- postal, telegraphic, telephonic... services...
- the naval and military defence...
- lighthouses...
- astronomical and meteorological observations
- quarantine
- fisheries in Australian waters...
- census and statistics... (Part V: Powers of the Parliament.

51,

Albeit, there is no mention of school education in the Constitution; school education remained a residual power of the states and territories.

There are 39 subsections to Section 51, each of which describes a ‘head of power’ under which the Parliament has the power to make laws. The Commonwealth legislative power is limited to that granted in the Constitution. There is, however, no mention of school education.

Section 51 of the Constitution of Australia grants legislative powers to the Australian (Commonwealth) Parliament only when subject to the constitution. When the six Australian colonies joined together in Federation in 1901, they became the original states and ceded some of their powers to the new Commonwealth Parliament. There are 39 subsections to section 51, each of which describes a ‘head of power’ under which the Parliament has the power to make laws.

The Commonwealth legislative power is limited to that granted in the Constitution. Powers not included in Section 51 are considered ‘residual powers’, and remain the domain of the states, unless there is another grant of constitutional power (e.g. Section 52 and Section 90 prescribe additional powers). Thus, education remained a residual power of the states and territories (White, 1987, 7-9). By 1994, however, writing from an AEU point of view, one informed commentator predicted in respect to school education in the coming decades the political dimensions of federalism would prevail over the legal/constitutional and financial (Borgeest, 1994).

High Court challenges and changes to the Constitution through referendum

Since the founding of Australian federalism in 1901, the Constitution has been constantly under High Court challenges. For example, for those people who follow the Commonwealth’s role in asylum seekers arriving by boat there are constant High Court challenges. Indeed, in respect to human rights, as expressed in counterterrorism, same-sex marriage and organised crime, the ‘federalism introduces additional actors and alternative viewpoints into the lawmaking process, altering patterns of discourse’ (Stephenson, 2014, n.p.).

High Court challenges concerning school education matters also loomed large. For example, in a blow to the Commonwealth, *ABC News* reported on the High Court's decision to uphold a challenge to the National School Chaplaincy Program, ruling the law used to maintain Commonwealth funding for chaplains was unconstitutional (*ABC News*, 2014a, n.p.).

A memorable and related High Court challenge, for many in regard to school education came with the Defence of Government Schools (DOGS) case of 1981. The High Court decision has long-term implications. Writing in *NewsMatilda*, Wallace (2005, n.p.) noted: In '1981 there was a constitutional coup in Australia'. According to the High Court there was to be 'no separation of church and state in Australia'. For Wallace (2005, n.p.), 'the effects of this decision have been much worse than the Whitlam sacking in 1975. At least Whitlam had a chance to be re-elected. In 1981 no newspaper understood or reported on what the High Court had done and academia was asleep at the wheel'.

The High Court ruling on the 1981 Defence of Government Schools (DOGS) case continued to stir the passions of commentators (Ely, 2011). Chapter Six will show greater detail of this decision.

Changes to the Constitution through referenda has provided scant changes. These, however, have occurred. In 1946 successful there was a successful referendum changes to Section 51, justifying Constitutionally the creation of the postwar Keynesian welfare state and which added the phrase 'benefits to students' (Part 2 - History of Australian Referendums, 1997). While most proposals to increase the power of the Commonwealth have been rejected in regard to the Social Services referendum (1946), however, voters seem to have been able to ascertain that the proposed amendment had more to do with social matters than with Commonwealth power (Bennett, 2003, n.p.).

Menzies later used the Constitutional changes resulting from this successful referendum to justify the introduction of Commonwealth scholarships for

university and school students (National Archives of Australia, n.d., n.p.). These developments were a part of massive social and economic changes in Australia, with a burning fuse leading directly to the massive educational compensatory programs of the Whitlam/Fraser governments. Beginning in the late 1940s, this was a period ‘during which the principles of the welfare state were consolidated not only in the UK but also in the US and Australia’ (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, pp. 133-4). Indeed,

In each of these countries the Fabian attitude, encapsulated in the political ideas of John Maynard Keynes, was fundamental to the development of the welfare state. Within the welfare state, equality of opportunity required more than simple access to the society’s dominant institutions. The fundamental commitment of a welfare state was the equalising of opportunities for all, to the creation of the conditions that enabled everyone to exercise autonomy. Equality was thus regarded as a fundamental condition of freedom (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, pp. 133-4).

Consequently, in no small way is the subject matter of this present book justified. A history of Commonwealth engagement with school education (1901-2015) is more than simply a study of changes in Australian schools.

Federalism’s financial elements and specific purpose grants

The Constitution leaves school education to the states, yet today it has amazing leverage—or indeed, even control—over school education. How is this possible? As Harrington (2011, n.p.) noted, ‘while there is no explicit education power in the Australian Constitution, there are a number of constitutional powers that enable the Commonwealth to enter the education arena and give it significant control’.

Commonwealth leverage on school education, as Harrington (2011, 2) showed, comes through Section 96 of the Constitution, a key power used ‘to legitimise Commonwealth intervention in the field of education’. This Section provides that, ‘the Parliament may grant financial assistance to any State on such terms and conditions as the Parliament thinks fit’ (Australian Constitution section 96, cited in Harrington, 2011, 2). Using this power, the

Commonwealth can tie the payment of grants to the states to implement certain Commonwealth education policies.

John Brumby (2008, n.p.) addressed the issue of the financial elements of federalism at the ANZSOG conference in Melbourne stating: ‘As our second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, accurately predicted in 1902, “The rights of self-government of the states have been fondly supposed to be safeguarded by the Constitution. It has left them legally free, but financially chained to the chariot wheels of the Commonwealth” ’.

Under the extreme national anxiety caused by World War II, however, the financial imperatives of federation for the states and territories were destined to become more drastic. Subsequently upheld by the High Court (*South Australia v Commonwealth, First Uniform Tax case* (1942)), the John Curtin Labor Government gained control of income tax. Sixty-one years later in 1999 the Commonwealth introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Premiers and state treasurers were on the back foot. Indeed, ‘the Commonwealth’s disproportionate financial power since the 1940s has clearly created an environment of State subservience and reduced the States’ ability to resist Commonwealth encroachment. For Davies (2007), ‘Victoria’s greatest Premier, Sir Henry Bolte summed up the dilemma facing State governments in 1972 when he remarked: “As a State Premier, I want the cash on the most favourable terms; but if the terms are not all that favourable, I still want the money” ’ (Prior, 1990, 202, cited in Davies, 2007, n.p.).

With a revenue base for the states and territories at almost dead-rock bottom annually, they trooped off to COAG cap-in-hand to the Commonwealth for handouts. That was until the Howard Government abandoned state-based sales tax in 2000 and legislated for the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Davies (2007) reported Howard as describing the GST as ‘the most important federalist breakthrough since the Commonwealth took over income tax powers through the exercise of the defence power during World War II’ (Howard, 2005, cited in Davies (2007, n.p.).

In the lead-up to the passing of the GST, many state and territory chief ministers, premiers and treasurers may have imagined the tax would alleviate their dire fiscal imbalance. Indeed, it was even spoken of as a state and territory tax being collected by the Commonwealth. These optimists, however, would soon be disappointed. Davies (2007, n.p.) wrote: ‘The GST in many respects overcomes the previous problems of fiscal imbalance by giving the States a growing source of untied grants’. Certainly, through to the time Davies wrote his article, the GST returns were adding much to the states’ and territories’ coffers. However, for Davies (2007, n.p.), ‘not everyone agrees with the Commonwealth’s characterisation of the GST as a State tax collected by the Commonwealth, but when one considers the figures for State budget enrichment as a result of the GST, they are truly startling’.

Davies (2007) goes on to argue the GST did nothing to break the political stranglehold the Commonwealth had over the states and territories. In fact, for Davies (2007) the opposite has occurred. Why is this so? In continuing his argument regarding the ineptitude of states and territories, Davies (2007, n.p.) argued: The ‘states have instead become increasingly reluctant to accept greater political responsibility for their affairs’.

With the advantage of the hindsight of seven years since Davies’ (2007) paper, the stark truth of this is even more apparent. The shock of the GFC was still being felt through until 2011, with many countries ‘knee-deep’ in recession. Supported by a strong surplus budgets through the last stages of the Howard years (1996-2007), with the onset of the GFC the Rudd Government was able to divert a recession through pumping huge amounts of money in such projects as ‘the Pink Batts’ scheme and the Primary Schools Building Program, sometimes labelled the Building Education Revolution (BER) (Harrison, 2010). The latter came under heavy criticism from the Australian National Audit Office, and particularly from News Corporation. This is an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapter Ten of this research.

The GFC resulted in a drastic loss of confidence and consequent downturn in spending, and GST revenues plummeted. States and territories budgets suffered in terms of Commonwealth handouts.

Federalism: the political ascendancy of the Commonwealth

Driven by global imperatives in education as discussed below in this chapter, and aided by the legal and financial elements of federalism, the Commonwealth has taken the high ground over the states and territories in the political tussles of federalism since the introduction of the GST. The Commonwealth has stolen much political authority from the States and Territories. Davies (2007, n.p.) puts it this way: ‘By the phrase “political authority” I mean two things—first, the level of faith that voters have that their State government is best positioned to manage certain issues, and secondly, the ability of State governments to win the political argument when they come up against the Commonwealth’. Indeed, ‘the States have either lost the argument, or contributed to bringing Commonwealth intervention on themselves by ... failing to manage adequately on their own’ (Davies, 2007, n.p.). Moreover, ‘in all these examples, where the States have ceded their political authority it has been a result of political controversies—questions of changing legal or financial balance hardly played any role at all’ (Davies, 2007, n.p.).

Davies (2007, n.p.) described ‘schools’n’ospitals’ as being the dominant fields where the Commonwealth has won political ground from the states and territories. As this research explains in Chapter Ten, the seven years since Davies (2007) wrote the above, the Commonwealth’s political dominance only has increased.

J. Keating (2011) argued one yardstick to gauge the Commonwealth’s ascendancy over the states and territories in a political sense has been the fate of the AEC, a body which as Chapter Six will show, evolved from a state education officials and ministers’ body to one where the Commonwealth gained a stronger presence during the 1960s. However,

according to J. Keating (2011, n.p.), its subsequent emergence into the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in June 1993 under the Paul Keating Government ‘has seen a stronger role played by the Commonwealth, with most and an increasing number of agenda items submitted by the Commonwealth Minister’. J. Keating (2011) reminded his readers, since July 2009 under the Rudd Government, ‘education policy at inter- and intra-governmental level has shifted from MCEETYA (now MCEECDYA) to the Council of Australian Governments’ (n.p.). Indeed, for J. Keating (2011, n.p.) ‘there is a case to be made that state and territory dialogue on education has been submerged under the largely Commonwealth led MCEECDYA and COAG processes’.

Whether the dominance of the Commonwealth over the states and territories in the politics of federalism is due to the ineptitude of the states and territories, as Davies (2007) argued, is problematic.

‘The Second XI’, political ineptness and Vertical Accountability Imbalance (VAI)

Davies (2007, n.p.) observed, ‘once upon a time the issue of vertical fiscal imbalance [VFI] caused great concern for federalists’. Indeed, for Davies (2007, n.p.), ‘perhaps now it is time to coin a new phrase—vertical accountability imbalance [VAI], which can be defined as the imbalance which arises when one level of government wishes to accept a lesser level of responsibility than the level required for the services it provides’.

An example of VAI may be found in the varying degrees of embedding the federally imposed AITSL Professional Standards and the ACARA National Curriculum by the various state and territory governments, an issue elaborated on in greater detail in Chapter Ten.

What is the ‘Second XI’ of Australian federation? As Tony Abbott, Minister for Health and the Aging, in the last few months of the Howard Government, stated: ‘People don’t want important issues left to the “Second XI” of State governments’ (Abbott, 2007, cited in Davies, 2007, n.p.).

Davies (2007, n.p.) suggested, ‘perhaps there is some substance to this argument’.

To illustrate his argument concerning VAI, or the alleged sometimes political incompetence of state and territory governments, Davies (2007) used examples current at the time—the Brian Bourke affair in Western Australia; and Labor Minister David White in Victoria. Davies (2007, n.p.) went on to refer to a Melbourne *Age* article from early 2007, claiming: There ‘was certainly in no doubt that our current State governments are not exactly drawn from the deep end of the talent pool’. *The Age* article stated: ‘By any reckoning, one State government (WA) is irredeemably corrupt, two—Queensland and Tasmania—have major problems in that regard, and Victoria’s “secret” police union agreement suggested Steve Bracks [at the time Premier of Victoria] is no Mr Clean’ (n.p.). Davies (2007, n.p.) went on to argue: ‘NSW, at the very least, seems to attract some extraordinarily low life to its parliamentary ranks’. Only the South Australian Government was deemed as being passable.

Referring to Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), Davies (2007, n.p.) concluded: ‘To paraphrase Lady Bracknell, one corrupt or inept state government may be regarded as a misfortune. Five certainly looks like carelessness, and raises serious questions about the people who comprise them and the way they operate’.

Davies (2007) then went on to examine state Labor governments and their connections with the ‘Labor Machine’ to illustrate his point concerning VAI. Perhaps, if he had been researching his article more recently, Davies would have been more alarmed to the 2013 revelations concerning the NSW Labor Party, where one-time Federal Labor Leader of the Opposition, Mark Latham, (2013m n.p.), writing in *The Monthly* claimed: the NSW Labor Party ‘has become a crime scene. Sussex Street has been cordoned off and forensic scientists sent in to gather evidence. On the other side of the thick yellow tape, a crowd of confused ALP branch members has gathered in search of answers’.

At this point an inattentive observer may have been excused for thinking Davies (2007) was correct in placing VAI squarely with Labor state and territory governments—that is until the 2014 NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) inquiries, where no less than ten serving Liberal Members and one premier have been found to be corrupt. Witness, Whitbourne and McKlymont's article in the *SMH* of 12 September 2014, detailing the political ramifications of this demonstrated corruption.

Corruption aside, some state governments are simply inept, some of the time, often because of accepting incompetent advice from bungling senior bureaucrats. This was demonstrated with the Tasmanian Labor governments during the period 2000-07 in respect to the ELs curriculum (Rodwell, 2009a; 2009b). While considering another period of Tasmanian educational history, Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) added: 'Indeed, Tasmanian education is rich in examples of not just contestation but muddle! Political back-flips, not the least of them'.

So what is the answer to this so-called VAI and inept state and territory governments in respect to the politics of federation and the so-called Second XI of federation? Davies (2007, n.p.) concluded: 'The first and most desirable solution would be to see a new breed of state government which had the political courage and the ability to unequivocally accept responsibility for its own affairs, and then act accordingly'. We need to be reminded, however, in the case of New South Wales it was this supposed 'new breed' of Liberal MPs responsible for the ten Cross Benchers and the sacked premier as a result of the ICAC enquiry referred to above.

Analysis and conclusions

This chapter began with a discussion derived from Davies (2007) concerning the relative strengths of centripetal and centrifugal forces in Australian federalism. It was as Menzies (1967) had stated, in respect to school education, centripetal forces have played out strongly on Australian federalism.

Despite the Constitution stipulating education to be a state responsibility, the legal, financial and political ingredients of federalism combining, by 2014 school education is virtually at the mercy of the Commonwealth. This has occurred through the mini-epochs of Australian federalism, as has been demonstrated above. The process has involved a kaleidoscope of influences, with major international issues or agendas influencing the shape of Australian federalism, in turn influencing the shape of Australian school education.

The political aspects of federalism and school educational policy hold much fresh and potentially revealing grist for the research mill. Davies (2007) and Hinz (2009) agree, justifying the use of Kingdon's *Agendas* (1984/2003) as an analytical lens for this research. What can an analysis of hundred-year-plus history of federalism and school educational history add to Kingdon's *Agendas* as an analytical tool? What historiographical issues does this study suggest? How and why does the Commonwealth leverage into a state and territory constitutional responsibility? How do school communities fare in this process?

CHAPTER FOUR

Coordinated Federalism: Federation, a looming war and compulsory school cadets (1901-1919)

Introduction

The Australian colonies federated during interesting times and with much promise in many areas. The new Commonwealth government was soon impacting on the daily lives of Australian school students, and for many in what may have been quite undesirable ways. The daily life of a school student changed dramatically, and many may have been left with a feeling they wished the federation never occurred. Now, after twenty or thirty years of their colonial government ordering and mandating their school education, students and school communities had a new layer of government with which to contend.

Although social control and social conflict historians are much more circumspect, evolutionary idealist educational historians argued the colonies had achieved much with their Public Instruction Acts. In 1901, with the departments of education, headed by progressive professional directors such as Peter Board in New South Wales and Frank Tate in Victoria, evolutionary idealist historians most often described school education as a huge national gain and progressing at a most pleasing manner. There is no documented evidence that at the time of federation, anybody of note—politician, policy-maker or other influential person—could have imagined within a decade the Commonwealth would be determining what happened in Australian schools for a considerable amount of time each week.

Moreover, these changes would set up shockwaves that would be manifest in the Australian school curriculum and routines for decades to come.

The establishment of compulsory school cadets surfaced slowly. First, there was the *Defence Act (1903)*, then in 1907 through universal military training legislation the Commonwealth providing for non-compulsory school cadets by statewide organisers. Finally, in 1911 the Commonwealth mandated school cadets for all male students aged twelve to eighteen years. These compulsory clauses continued through to 1929.

What were the socio-political conditions which would bring about such a massive change in mindset? The 1911 mandating of school cadets coincided with an increased anxiety of Asian invasion of Australia, a growing influence of eugenics on policy-makers and a massive increase in the influence of militarism and nationalism. Here, eugenics is defined in its broadest terms to encompass ‘soft’ environmentalist eugenics, as opposed to ‘hard’ hereditarian eugenics.

In explaining the advent of the Commonwealth’s initial foray into state-provided school education an analysis is necessary of the circumstances according to the Kingdon’s model of policy enactment, consisting of three separate ‘streams’: Problems—real or contrived—solutions, and politics came together coming together.

During the years building up the 1910 amendment to the *Defence Act (1903)* many Australians—politicians, media elites and policy-makers—successfully orchestrated a general belief Japan was about to invade Australia. Nationalism and militarism were seeping into every Australian household. If the increased support it was receiving in federal parliament is held as an index, the political support for compulsory school cadets was rapidly increasing during the first decade of federation. Politicians such as Tasmania’s Senator Henry Dobson argued the states were not fulfilling their obligation. School education involved more than what their current curricula was providing. In order to ameliorate perceived racial decay and the

perceived dire state of the national defences, compulsory school cadets in the form of physical education and military drills were needed. This is the solution strand to Kingdon's (1984/2003) model.

Kingdon's (1984/2003) idea of problems blending with solutions through the political process came with the surging nationalist militarism of the epoch covering federation through to the conclusion of the Great War. This ensured a *zeitgeist* conducive to mandating school cadets in Australian school education. The political dynamics in the new Commonwealth Parliament added to a necessary climate to introduce the legislation.

Initially, Defence Minister Senator Thomas Playford from South Australia (1905-1907) in 1905 opposed the introduction of compulsory school cadets. Later, however, it was the parliamentary effort of such people as Senator Henry Dobson from Tasmania when Chairman of Committees 1908-09 who steered through the legislation, assisted by South Australian Labor Senator George Pearce, Defence Minister with the Fisher Government (Pyvis, 2007, 64-6). Dobson himself had been instrumental in the compulsory clauses of the *Tasmanian Public Instruction Act (1885)* (Dollery, 1981). Undoubtedly, developing publicly supported discourse from the emerging severe climate of eugenics, nationalism and militarism provided the political stream of Kingdon's (1984/2003) model of agenda-setting and policy development. Out of the general mix flowed the policy—in this case, mandatory school cadets for boys twelve to eighteen years.

The political dynamics of the early federal governments

State's rights, protectionism, free trade, militarism, nationalism, imperialism, socialism, capitalism and pastoralism were dominant forces underpinning the political dynamic of the first two decades of federation. A strong party-based political allegiance had not settled as yet into the Federal Parliament, with individual politicians being very fluid in their political loyalties.

During the early years of the Commonwealth, the Protectionist Party was dominant. It was formally organised from 1889 until 1909, maintaining Australia needed protective tariffs to allow Australian industry to grow and provide employment. It had its greatest strength in Victoria and in the rural areas of New South Wales. Its most prominent leaders were Sir Edmund Barton and Alfred Deakin, respectively, the first and second prime ministers of Australia (Rutledge, 1979; Norris, 1981). Set against a diverse group of conservatives was the rising influence of the Labour Party (after 1910, Labor Party), which would eventually ensure the amendment to the *Defence Act (1903)* providing for compulsory school cadets.

The establishment of the High Court was a landmark feature of the early federal governments, an act soon to influence what happened in Australian schools. On 25 August 1903, legislation was finally passed to create it consisting of three judges. Unconnected with the High Court legislation, Barton resigned his party leadership position on 24 September 1903 to be replaced by Deakin who then formed the first Deakin government (Rutledge, 1979; Norris, 1981).

In the early years of federal parliament, as Pyvis (2007) showed, *inter alia*, politicians headed by Dobson spoke on the need for universal compulsory military training. The scheme, however, was rejected, ‘largely because of fears over how it would be received by an electorate that in the post-Boer War climate was intolerant of any signs of “militarism” ’ (Inglis, 1968, as cited in Pyvis, 2007, 64). With the new nation increasingly coming under a firm xenophobic grip, soon Dobson and his ilk would have their way with mandating school cadets.

As Australia’s second prime minister, Alfred Deakin, completed a significant legislative program leading to the mandatory 1911 school cadet legislation. He expanded the High Court, and responding to significant imperialist and militarist imperatives, provided major funding for the purchase of naval ships, leading to the establishment of the Royal Australian Navy as a significant force under the Fisher government. Responding to

these same imperatives, in 1909 Field Marshall Kitchener was invited to Australia to report on the state of the country's defences (Grey, 2008). With support from Labor and some influential senators such as Dobson, this resulted in the creation of the school cadets, marking the first instance of Commonwealth involvement in the states' school education (Pyvis, 2007).

Confronted by the rising ALP in 1909, Deakin merged his Protectionist Party with Joseph Cook's Anti-Socialist Party to create the Commonwealth Liberal Party—commonly called the Fusion Party—the main ancestor of the modern Liberal Party of Australia. The Deakin-led Liberal Party government lost to Fisher Labor at the 1910 election (Crowley, 1981). As with much of its history, Labor has been responsible for increasing centralist control, and in this case the first federal government to legislate for engagement in school education.

A free trader and Labor Party politician, William Morris (Billy) Hughes dominated the Australian political dynamic during the Great War and was a champion for compulsory military training, including that of school cadets (Pyvis, 2007). Originally, he had opposed Federation on the terms proposed by the Founding Fathers. Forever the political opportunist, he turned at once to the Federal arena where he foresaw the issues which interested him most—defence, immigration and industrial relations—would be dealt with (Fitzhardinge, 1983).

The colonies and their provisions for compulsory public education

Following the granting of self-government to the Australian colonies, the colonies had established departments of public instruction and along with that, compulsory school attendance for five- to fifteen-year olds for five days a week for upwards of forty weeks per year.

The pioneer Australian educational historian, A.G. Austin (1961/1977, 173), wrote: 'Between 1872 and 1895 the six Australian colonies passed education Acts which committed them to the establishment of national systems of education entirely supported by central [state] government funds,

and under Ministerial control'. Importantly, for this research, 'as education remained a State responsibility after Federation these colonial Acts—popularly known as 'free, compulsory and secular' Acts—still constitute the legal bases of the centralised State systems of education in this country'. 'Eight out of ten Australian children' went on to receive a state-provided education.

By the time of Federation, however, due to demands of the state and of the ruling elites for more progressive systems of education these colonial departments of public instruction had undergone massive changes. Generally, these reviews put in place more progressive curricula in each state—physical culture, nature study and so on (Barcan, 1980, chap. 12).

Australian federalism

The Australian colonies federated, forming the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901. The Commonwealth subsumed those various colonial government departments dealing with external activities, such as posts and telegraphs, trade and defence, immigration. State parliaments continued to control those whose activities lay within the states, such as public works, railways and school education.

As this research has described in Chapter Three, the period from 1901 through to the Great War in respect to federalism, the relationship between the Commonwealth and the states was a very much a standoff affair. In regard to federation, Prime Minister R.G. Menzies (1960, 5), wrote: 'We should note in the preamble to the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* that it was "the people of New South Wales, Victoria" and so on who "agreed to unite" in a Commonwealth'. Menzies (1960, 5) argued: 'It is sometimes said loosely that the Commonwealth was the creation of the Parliaments of the colonies. That's not so. The people "agreed to unite" '. Consequently, Menzies (1960, 5) went on to stress: 'The establishment of the Commonwealth was not something done by the existing colonial Parliaments: It was the product of a series of independent conventions containing the leaders of constitutional thought in Australia'.

This is an important point to consider with any examination of the movement of educational decision-making from the states and territories to the Commonwealth. While at the time of Federation, public education was firmly placed as a state activity, and over a century much of this decision-making has been transferred to the Commonwealth. Originally, it was ‘the people’—albeit, *through* the state parliaments (but not *for* state parliaments)—for whom such activities as education were constituted.

Zeitgeist: xenophobia, nationalism and militarism

Including the treatment of Chinese during the Gold Rushes of the 1850s, colonial Australians had shown a nervous and anxious relationship with Asians in Australia. However, the decidedly surprising victory of the Japanese Navy over the Russian Navy in the Tsushima Straits in 1905, coupled with the strong German challenge to Britain’s world naval supremacy, Australians had begun to entertain seriously the possibility of invasion. In 1906 the federal Government announced the principle of universal military training.

Imperial Japan dominated Australian strategic military thinking during the period 1901-39. Meaney (1996, 111) wrote how ‘the central issue for Australian diplomacy and defence during the years 1901-39 was the threat of Japan and the search for security in the Pacific’. In fact, ‘as an integral and autonomous part of the British Empire and Commonwealth, Australia in this period looked first and foremost to Britain to safeguard its international interests’. But distant Britain was looming as a doubtful quality when it came to Australia’s defence partner.

Meaney (1996, 111) goes on to state: ‘For this reason Australian policy-makers, their official advisers and those few citizens with an interest in foreign affairs devoted much time and energy to assessing both Japan’s intentions and Britain’s policy towards the Pacific’. A prominent figure amongst this elite group of policy makers was the Tasmanian, E.L. Piesse, the Director of Military Intelligence 1916-19, head of the Pacific Branch

and Foreign Affairs section of the Prime Minister's Department 1919-23. In Meaney's (1996, 111) words, Piesse was 'a highly articulate contributor to the debate over Japan and Australian security, who offered the best informed and most cogently argued analysis of the problem and thereby the greatest insight into the subject'.

During this period, the Australian print media was awash with accounts and fictionalised stories of Japan's imminent invasion of Australia. Any contemporary reader of such popular magazines was the *Bulletin* and the *Lone Hand* must have been left wondering when the day of the inevitable invasion would arrive (Walker, 1999).

Walker (1999, 2002, 2003, 2005) has made a major contribution to the social and cultural effects of this phobia and panic. Collectively, this research showed around the beginning of the twentieth century there was a mass phobia and panic depicting Asian invasions of Australia. This research showed consistent patterns of gendered and racialised assumptions setting Australian men, the bush and the future of the white race against Australian women, the city, and the asianisation of the nation. Indeed, for Walker (1999; 2002; 2003; 2005) these fears and phobias created a powerful case for an answering tradition of defiant, bush-based masculinity in Australia, resulting in compulsory school cadets.

While there was national anxieties concerning 'the yellow peril' in the decade leading up to the Great War, there is no evidence to suggest this constituted a manufactured moral panic by politicians for a specific political purpose, as was evident in later decades concerning the cold war, or later by early twenty-first century governments of allegedly 'trashed' budgets by previous governments. Yet, early in the twentieth century these national anxieties were sufficient to assist in involving the Commonwealth in Australian school education when the Commonwealth was only five years old.

Field Marshal Kitchener's report and Section 51 xxix (external affairs powers)

In 1909, Prime Minister Alfred Deakin introduced a bill into parliament providing for compulsory military training in peacetime, referred to as universal training. This was a measure with broad bilateral support, having been adopted by the Opposition Labour Party at its 1908 conference. In terms of Kingdon's (1984/2003) model this was a critical element in bringing the political strands together with the solution. High-profile British imperialist, Kitchener's report tended to legitimise the argument in support of a pending invasion.

At the invitation of the Deakin Government, Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Great Britain visited Australia in 1909 to inspect the existing state of defence preparedness of the young Commonwealth, and advise on the best means of providing Australia with a land defence. Submitted in February 1910, Kitchener's report recommended the introduction of compulsory military training.

Writing in the *Griffith Review*, Lockhart (n.d., n.p.) demonstrated how the Kitchener report was based on a possible invasion, as well as an expeditionary venture: 'Kitchener's opening strategic assessment played on popular fears by raising the possible threat of an 'invasion—most would have assumed from Japan. This was followed by a plan for establishing and training combat units comprised of citizen soldiers'.

Lockhart (n.d., n.p.) argued the whole business of the compulsory school cadets and its imperial ramifications were politicised through the selective promotions Kitchener arranged: 'British and Australian officers with imperial views were promoted to the most powerful military positions at the expense of well-qualified and influential nationalist officers'. The Fisher's Labor Government was in awe of Kitchener, most critically Defence Minister Senator Pearce (Lockhart, n.d.). This is a strong argument we should first look to the motives of the change agents and politicians, and tease out the special interests these changes may have

served. In this light, the first encounter Australian school students had with the Commonwealth was primarily serving the interests of Whitehall in London. Would the Australian Constitution permit the Commonwealth mandating school cadets?

Section 51 (xxix) of the Constitution has attracted the attention of legal academics. For example, it has been a topic of the Samuel Griffith Society (Hulme, 1995). According to Coper (1987), it is not immediately obvious exactly what the Founding Fathers intended by conferring upon the Commonwealth Parliament the right to legislate with respect to external affairs.

Section 51 (xxix), indeed, had been amended a number of times in the Constitutional Conventions debating the draft Constitution in the 1890s. Adopted by the 1891 Sydney Convention, the draft Constitution allowed the Parliament to make laws with respect to ‘External Affairs and Treaties’ (Coper, 1987; McDermott, 1990). Perhaps surprisingly to some, an examination of the available information reveals the Australian Federation was barely two years old when the Commonwealth legislated for the *Defence Act (1903)* paving the way for the eventual provision of mandatory school cadets. The 1903 legislation and the 1907 amendments legislating for non-compulsory school cadets were all a part of what Kingdon’s model allows for in respect of the problem strand blending with the political strand leading to the 1911 policy compulsory school cadets.

Compulsory school cadets

Ramsland (2015, 21-31) wrote on the life of Arthur Wheen, ANZAC war hero and translator of Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), including Wheen’s experiences as a school cadet, compulsorily enlisted while attending Sydney Boys’ High School from 1911-12. Here we gain a fascinating insight into the way in which the school cadets shaped school life—and indeed, often careers—in what was then one of the foremost government Sydney boys’ secondary schools.

The various colonial Public Instruction Acts had legislated for compulsory attendance for children between the ages of five and fifteen years. Having mandated school attendance, governments could do much with the school population it now had under its surveillance. Pyvis (2006) argued in its first engagement with state schooling, the Commonwealth successfully positioned military training as a neglected aspect of ordinary education in a manner enabling the Commonwealth to deploy schools and teachers in the service of the scheme and to make schools subordinate to military authority, and of course, imperial interests. This involvement came through the Section 51 xxix of the *Defence Act (1903)*. The compulsory clauses of the school cadet regulations ran from 1911-1929.

At the time of the passing of the *Defence Act (1903)* secondary education provided by the state governments was in its infancy, with the bulk of secondary education being provided by private schools. For example, New South Wales state secondary schools were established in select regions in 1883 (Barcan, 1988); while Tasmanian state secondary schools were established as late as 1911 (Phillips, 1985).

School cadets began in England in the 1850s (Stocking, 2008). The first unit was established in Australia in 1866 at St Mark's Collegiate School in New South Wales. This unit subsequently became a part of the King's School Cadet Corps in 1869. For much of its history, as is evidenced by the example provided by Ramsland (2015) above, the cadet movement had a focus on providing military training in the hope many cadets would later undertake some form of military service, either voluntarily or, in the case of the years 1911-1929, compulsorily.

The cadet movement was established in most colonies before the non-compulsory 1906 Commonwealth Military Cadet Corps (Stocking, 2008). Cadets remained under state auspices until the Commonwealth Cadet Corps was established. Conscription for part-time home service, including service by cadets, was introduced in 1906 and, under the *Defence Act (1903)*, the

cadet corps was included in the provisions for universal military training (Hellyer, 1981, 40).

Statutory Rules 1906, No. 93 of the non-compulsory Commonwealth Cadet Corps read:

Provisional Regulations Under the *Defence Act (1903-1904)* authorised an annual allowance of 7s. 6d. be paid to Officers Commanding Detachments for each cadet who has completed the prescribed musketry course.

This allowance will be utilized by Officers Commanding Detachments as a grant towards the supply of uniform of the authorized pattern to cadets and for incidental expenses connected therewith such cleaning, repairs, alterations, etc.

No portion of the Clothing Allowance is to be diverted to any other purpose nor is any monetary grant to be made to cadets (Kemp, 1906. Statutory Rules).

These Provisional Regulations provided for a small annual allowance for officers commanding cadet detachments, along with a small allowance for uniforms. This showed the degree of Commonwealth's involvement in Australian school education during the first decade of federation. On 2 July 1906 the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced 'the *Commonwealth Gazette* of Saturday contains a number of appointments in connection with the Commonwealth Cadet Corps' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1906).

Parents met the bulk of the cost for the cadet uniforms: Boys were measured, and uniforms bought, but the Commonwealth was slow in coming to the party, causing some consternation with some parents (e.g., see *Adelaide Advertise*, 1906).

Appreciating the full effect school cadets had on day-to-day school life and the curriculum, first we can turn to the New South Wales Central West city of Bathurst. The Bathurst Public School was established in 1863. Prior to the building of the Bathurst High School on the current site in West Bathurst, it was housed in buildings—still existing—in Russell Street in

what is now central Bathurst. On 1 May 1906, the *SMH* congratulated Bathurst Public School on winning the Cadet Challenge Shield for six successive years (*SMH*, 1906).

The same year the *Brisbane Courier Mail*, illustrating the same numbers of students and apparent time commitment military cadets, the paper reported: ‘Much public interest was taken in the parade of metropolitan State School Cadets held yesterday afternoon’ (*Courier Mail*, 2006, 3). Indeed, ‘the two battalions assembled at the Adelaide Street drill-shed, under Major Halstead, and marched via Edward, Queen, and George streets to the Domain. Major Halstead was attended by Captain T.H. Dodds ... staff officer for cadets, and Major Carroll, of the Instructional Staff, was also present’ (*Courier Mail*, 2006, 3). There were only twenty-three absentees out of a total strength of 720. The drill and training they would receive, and the discipline they would undergo, would help towards the formation of a round and good character’ (*Courier Mail*, 2006, 3).

Following Kitchener’s report, there was a noticeable expansion in military infrastructure in state capitals. For example, today driving along what is now the Anzac Highway through suburban Adelaide the massive Keswick Barracks bears the date 1913 concreted into its façade (Donovan, n.d.). This was a new complex of buildings on the boundaries of the Adelaide suburbs of Ashford, Keswick and Forrestville. Similar developments took place in other capital and regional cities. These developments added authority to the federal politicians such as senators Dobson and Pearce who were arguing for compulsory school cadets.

The perceived problem of racial degeneracy

‘The compulsory training of our youth would have a very marked beneficial effect upon the physique of the nation’, Dobson argued in the Senate in 1905 (Dobson, CPD, 1905, 3194, cited in Pyvis, 2007, 71). The young had to be ‘improved’ physically and psychologically for the good of the state. Only the Commonwealth was in a position to undertake this on a national basis. Dobson actually went so far as to claim the state was threatened by

the ‘deterioration’ of male youth. This was not, however, a hollow claim, rather it echoed a current commonly held belief, due to the raging eugenic discourse. This discourse added legitimacy to the claim compulsory school cadets would be a nation-building exercise, rhetoric which would in explanatory terms for this research bring the political strand of Kingdon’s model together with the problem strand to produce the necessary amending legislation to the *Defence Act (1903)*.

I have argued elsewhere (Rodwell, 1998b, Chap. 1), particularly through their compulsory clauses, the various nineteenth-century colonial Public Instruction Acts had brought massive changes to the lives of Australian children attending state schools. During the first decade of the twentieth century national and racial efficiency became a catchcry for progressive reformers and policy-makers. Only through a healthy and vital society could the true potential of the nation and race be realised. Billy Hughes was one such eugenic champion. Another was the South Australian lawyer-academic, Jethro Brown, who articulated a comprehensive account of the new demands by society on the state. In his *Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation*, in 1912 he argued the old nineteenth-century political economy of *laissez faire* was destined to fail to answer the pressures of Australia’s social and economic problems of the new century. In his advocacy for compulsory school cadets, Dobson was engaging in this discourse in pushing for compulsory school cadets.

Amendments to the *Defence Act (1903)*

In his attempts to introduce compulsory school cadets, Dobson had some political challenges. Pyvis (2007, 69) showed ‘not only did [he] have to deal with the fact that schooling was traditionally a responsibility for the states, but he also needed to have the *Defence Act (1903)* amended to bring in the “educational” reforms’, the terminology in which he wrapped his arguments. He needed political support, particularly that of the Minister for Defence, Senator Playford from South Australia. Pyvis (2007) showed Playford was not convinced the Commonwealth had the power to introduce

compulsory school cadets: ‘We could not compel them to handle rifles and to go through drills as part of the ordinary school curriculum’ (CPD, 1905, 3210, cited in Pyvis, 2007, 59).

Playford also warned finance for the scheme would also be a problem for the Commonwealth. Finally, however, ‘Playford agreed to earmark some funds for developing the existing school-cadet training scheme, and Parliament voted a sum of £7,000 [\$14,000] for that purpose’ (Pyvis, 2007, 59). The motion for national military education again lapsed.

In September 1907, Dobson returned to the cause with a Bill to amend the *Defence Act (1903)* to allow the compulsory ‘education of all boys and youths over twelve and under nineteen years of age’ (CPD, 1907, 2873, cited in Pyvis, 2007, 59). Political support was building. In two years time Kitchener would be invited to Australia to write his report on Australia’s defence needs. The *zeitgeist* of xenophobic militarism and nationalism was building quickly. Pyvis (2007, 70) wrote: ‘In 1907, parliamentary support for the “education” scheme reached unprecedented levels. Among those who spoke in its favour in the Senate were J.P. Gray (Free Trade), E.D. Millen (Free Trade), G. Henderson (Labor), and Senator Pearce (Labor) (Pyvis, 2007, 70). Indeed, ‘the “ignorance” of young males was neglected for a few years, and the expansion of their “education” in the service of the state was delayed by the collapse of the Deakin Government and subsequent ministries’.

With Dobson, now Chairman of Committees (1908-09) and steering through the legislation, the incoming Fisher Labor Government would save the day for the champions of compulsory school cadets.

In 1910, the *Defence Act (1903)* was finally amended ‘to cater for the new “education” initiative’ (Pyvis, 2007, 70). Now the Commonwealth required all males who turned twelve to eighteen years in 1911 to register for military training. Moreover, boys reaching twelve or thirteen years in that year had to be enrolled through their schools and train at their schools. A total of

155,000 youths registered in 1911, and 92,463 were required to begin training immediately (Barrett, 1979, 69-71, cited in Pyvis, 2007, 70).

In explanatory terms, Kingdon's (1984/2003) problem and political strands of policy development had melded in his model of policy development, resulting in the legislation amending the *Defence Act (1903)* mandating a national program of school cadets.

One can only assume in the years prior to the horrors of Gallipoli and Flanders the champions of compulsory school cadets saw this legislation as a permanent feature of Australian school education. While the horrors of the Great War may have dented their enthusiasm, however, it lasted through until 1929 until severe budgetary issues brought it to an end.

Militarisation of school life

During July 1909, the Commonwealth Minister for Defence, Joseph Cook, issued a report on physical training in state schools. The report came as a result of an interstate conference on the subject. The Commonwealth and all states, except Tasmania, were represented. The conference report recommended the appointment of a supervisor of physical training for all school children in Australia, and the appointment in each state of expert teachers to carry out the training of instructors for the Cadet forces and of teachers for the schools. Also required by the legislation was the establishment of permanent training centres, properly equipped and staffed, and provisions for the training of selected teachers in physical drill (*The Mercury*, 1909).

Pyvis (2007, 82) wrote: 'Schools were utilized as drilling places, teachers were made to instruct students—cadets—in military training and principals and schools were subordinated to military authority. Truants from the scheme were 'detained'—after school—in their thousands in military prisons'.

Not only were they detained after school, but even before the compulsory clauses of the *School Cadets Act (1906)* children of parents who opposed militarism were segregated and victimised in at least one Hobart school. Here, a parent complained to the local board of advice that because a boy had refused to join the school cadet movement he had been insulted and ridiculed by the teacher in front of the school and then made to walk behind the girls (*The Clipper*, 1906, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 85).

Military ideals in schools were most manifest even before the advent of non-compulsory school cadets. William Lewis Neale, the newly appointed Tasmanian Director of Education, declared at the commencement of his term in office in the 'new order' of his regime did not signal the substitution of physical culture for military drill. 'At assembly and dismissal, and in all changes in the schoolroom, simple military drill should always be used' Neale stated (*Educational Record*, 1906, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 85). Teachers were encouraged not to forget military drill, 'is an aid of the highest value in securing economy of time, and the mechanical side of good discipline' (*Educational Record*, 1906, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 85). It was with these beliefs Neale lectured his teachers at a summer school of instruction held in Launceston early in 1906. He warned the teachers with the impending 'new curriculum' would prescribe a little military drill for each class. Neale enthused: 'Those who have not used it in both the playground and in the classroom have no conception of how easy it makes control' (*Educational Record*, 1906, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 85).

The Peace Society and the print media views on school cadets

The Peace Society organised itself against school cadets. In Tasmania, at least, the society pitted itself against the school cadet movement. However, the strong social attitude in favour of militarism in schools is evidenced in a *Mercury* editorial, where the paper condescendingly noted the good intent of those who supported the Peace Society's ideals because its members were 'all perfectly honest and sincere' (*Daily Post*, 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86). The editorial complained it was unfortunate the objectives of the cadet corps were so little understood. For the editorial, it certainly was not to

develop in children warmongering attitude, but it was the state schools' responsibility to enhance a sense of fitness and citizenship amongst the children who attended them. Citizenship always implied desire to defend one's borders, 'and to this extent, we must insist good work is being done, and that they are learning one of the first duties of citizenship' (*Daily Post*, 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86). Moreover, the Hobart daily insisted, anybody who had undergone military training would agree on the effect it had on an individual.

The Mercury maintained military training encouraged smartness and quick movement: Children's minds were alert to catch the words of command, 'and their bodies are strained to act in concert with the mind' (*The Mercury*, 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86). And, for the *Mercury*, the unity of mind and body was a principal aim of progressive education, with all sorts of 'devices being used in other areas of the curriculum to achieve the same end' (*The Mercury* 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86). According to the editorial, perhaps the most important effect of all was the production of discipline, 'even of those who may resist the most stereotyped methods' (*The Mercury*, 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86).

In Tasmania, the Labour movement, too, supported military instruction in schools. The Hobart-based *Clipper* which spoke to the Labour movement condemned the opponents of military instruction: 'Schoolboys when learning drill and marksmanship to make them efficient citizen soldiers, cannot help growing up to a useful realisation of this power as well as soldiers' ('School Cadets', cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86). *The Clipper* argued for militarism in schools for reasons of protection of the class, or political movement it represented. It perceived military instruction as a means of breaking down class distinction and preventing military expertise being the prerogative of the 'privileged classes': 'The military spirit is only dangerous when bearing arms becomes the special cult of the privileged classes. The atmosphere of our State schools is not conducive to privilege' (*The Clipper* 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86).

A similar view was taken by the Hobart *Daily Post*, which also spoke for the Labour movement. It contended the Peace Society could be credited with three things: 'The possession of some impracticable ideas, or either incapacity to understand the great international problems of the day, and a laudable desire that every man shall "sing the merry song of peace to all his neighbours"' ('School Cadets', 1908, cited in Rodwell, 1987, 86).

Parents object

'Some day history will tell of this military persecution; it will tell how the men of 1910, with a coward's courage, bound the soldier's knapsack upon the shoulders of voteless boys, while they themselves went free' (Rev. Leyton Richards, 1912, cited in Pyvis, 2007, 70). Indeed, some parents may have complained about disruptions to school life, but generally their voices were not heard. This was a time before school councils and parents and friends' association, with a general absence of any forum for concerned parents' voices to be heard. Generally, parents were kept beyond the school's outside gate. There was, however, always the Letters to the Editor column in newspapers, and there were many of these.

Considerations of federalism

In the only Commonwealth engagement in school education under the authority of the *Defence Act (1903)* came during the first three decades of federation. While there are ample examples of parents and members of the community-at-large objecting to what was happening with the school cadet regime, there was no High Court constitutional challenge to Dobson's amendment to the *Defence Act (1903)*. Whether a High Court challenge would have been successful or not is conjectural.

Perhaps, the political dynamics of the time and the *zeitgeist* of xenophobic-based militarism and nationalism discouraged and such challenge. Because the amending legislation was through the *Defence Act (1903)*, the Commonwealth did not need to negotiate with individual states to ensure compliance, as it would need to do with so much future legislation involving the Commonwealth and school education.

In the history of Commonwealth engagement in school education, this was the only intervention under the *Defence Act (1903)*. In the case of the future interventions, all three elements of federalism—legal, financial and political—would be operative. As the political dynamics responded to the xenophobic nationalism and militarism, the political element of federalism in the case of nationally mandated school cadets would be very manageable.

School cadets: aftermath

The Great Depression brought an end to compulsory school cadets. The policy imperatives for the movement had passed. The Commonwealth closed down the mandatory clauses of the provision for school cadets in 1929. Pyvis (2007, 82) summarized his research in respect to compulsory school cadets: ‘The national military education scheme of 1911-29 set the precedent for Commonwealth intervention in schooling’. Indeed, for Pyvis (2007, 82), ‘the Commonwealth’s right to compel Australian youth to undertake military training was justified by representing such training as simply a “continuation of ordinary education” and then appealing to the compulsory provisions that attached to formal schooling’. Consequently, ‘proponents won over their [Commonwealth] parliamentary colleagues by arguing that youth had an obligation to serve the state and by situating the state as the beneficiary of the scheme’ (Pyvis, 2007, 82).

Australia’s youth, indeed, was obliged to serve the state and Empire. Eighty or so years later with a long history of Commonwealth involvement in school education, the Commonwealth would develop all kinds of leverages to encourage Australia’s youth to serve the state, for example through such programs designed to increase Year 12 retention rates, and being associated with a term that would carry the label of the development of social capital (Rodwell, 2017).

Analysis and conclusions

The Constitution ensured schooling was strictly a state’s prerogative, and the states had put considerable effort into their systems of state education.

Within the space of a few short years how could the Commonwealth shoulder its way through the constitutional provisions and begin its leverage on state education and schooling?

Thanks in part to the dominant *zeitgeist* of defence and militarism in Australian society, Kingdon's (1984/2003) problem, political strands—the solution—and political will came together during the early years of the Commonwealth, and through the *Defence Act (1903)* provided an entre for the Commonwealth into state schooling.

Then in the absence of a minister for education there was the special role of Dobson, the policy entrepreneur, who had himself been active in providing for free, compulsory and secular state education in his home state of Tasmania. For him Commonwealth interference in state schooling was a simple step on from actions by the states.

It is also important to note this entry by the Commonwealth into state affairs of schooling prepared another generation of politicians disposed to Commonwealth leverage on state schooling policy during the approaching decades: For example, there was Joe Lyons, one-time school teacher, who had been Minister for Education in Tasmania before entering federal parliament and becoming a long-term prime minister, and a later prime minister. Then there was Robert Menzies, who was a school student during these years.

Revisionist and social control historians such as Miller (1986) had argued the compulsory clauses of the Colonial Public Education Acts would provide for governments in the interests of the bourgeois ruling class. Now governments had all school children between the ages of six and fifteen years compulsorily attending schools for five days a week for forty or more weeks a year, and those student twelve years and above compulsorily attending school cadets.

The agents of the state did not need to travel around the countryside rounding up military recruits. All that was needed was a single visit to a school. Of course, whether or not this can be explained by any Marxist precondition is problematic. Certainly, the compulsory school cadet regime had benefits for the control of the working classes in the interests of the bourgeois ruling elites. And these compulsory clauses certainly enabled the entry of the Commonwealth through school cadets into school education.

The *Defence Act (1903)* provided the first small chink in the Constitution allowing the Commonwealth to leverage on the states in respect to educational policy. And it was just the beginning of slowly developing avalanche of Commonwealth involvement in Australian schooling.

CHAPTER FIVE

Cooperative Federalism: the efficiency dynamic and the progressive years (1919-39)

Introduction

Compulsory school cadets for school education students ran through to 1929, until financial stringencies of the Great Depression brought the program to an end. Following this, the Commonwealth became more interested in national fitness for Australia's youth for its socio-economic ends as opposed to martial ends, although this had been a lingering part of the old discourse. Again, for policy-makers at a federal level schools would be a very convenient starting point for this. The cooperation of the states would be vital. How could this federal intervention be achieved?

The answer came with the Commonwealth through ministerial councils working with state counterparts and reaching out to schools for various programs related to national fitness. This chapter will show the Commonwealth would supply the ideas and research, and some money, but through their bureaucracies and schools the states would furnish the remainder of what was required by the Commonwealth.

Without the financial and political leverage that would come with acquiring income tax legislation in 1942, the Commonwealth was committed to federalism, but lacking legal conditions or political motivation to interfere directly with school education. The compulsory clauses of the school cadet program had been through the *Defence Act (1903)*. There is no evidence

from the Commonwealth parliamentary discourse the government seriously entertained any idea of returning to compulsory school cadets. There were other less expensive options, and options appealing to the eugenic-inspired ideals of national fitness.

For the Commonwealth there was no other legal access to the nation's schools, even if they contemplated the idea. However, by working cooperatively through the various newly established ministerial councils, the Commonwealth could do much to build up what it believed to be a nation of fit youths.

The horrors of Gallipoli and Flanders had dented severely the old *zeitgeist* of the pre-Great War epoch. Despite the antics of some fringe far-right militarist groups such as the New Guard, Australia was retreating from nationalism and militarism, but not from eugenics. Increasingly, eugenics in its soft and usually environmentalist forms had captured the attention of professionals—including medical doctors, researchers and educationalists. National fitness required government intervention, and with compulsory school attendance schools were a convenient starting point. Within the mindset of cooperative federalism of the conservative federal governments, ministerial councils could achieve much. This, however, is a contested point of view. Adopting a narrow and hard hereditarian view of eugenics, C. Macdonald (2013, 172) found no such connection of eugenics with public policy.

Translating this into Kingdon's (1984/2003) explanatory model, there was the issue of the perceived need for national fitness, a possible political opportunity within the boundaries of conservative governments and perceived federalist frameworks. This could be achieved through policy initiatives the government perceived as being tried and true as it had formulated in such already established ministerial councils as the Loans Council, the NHMRC and the CSIRO.

The Great Depressions and the political dynamics of interwar governments

The Great Depression dominated Australian society, economy and politics in ways few people hitherto could have imagined. There had been relative optimism with the sustained economic growth of the immediate postwar construction years. This was an epoch dominated by conservative federal governments. The Nationalist Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, ushered in this period (1917-23).

Stanley Melbourne Bruce, 1st Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, from the Nationalist Coalition was in office from 1923-29. For many, he brought a touch of British aristocracy to Australia political life. He made wide-ranging so-called ‘reforms’ and mounted a comprehensive nation-building program in government, but his controversial handling of industrial relations led to his dramatic defeat at the polls in 1929 (Radi, 1979).

In office, Bruce pursued an energetic and diverse agenda, strengthening Commonwealth imperatives. He comprehensively overhauled federal government administration and oversaw its transfer to the new capital city of Canberra. He implemented many initiatives to the Australian federal system strengthening the role of the Commonwealth. His establishment of ministerial councils is at the crux of this chapter (Radi, 1979).

In 2015, the Queensland Government defined a ministerial council as being, ‘a formal meeting of Ministers of the Crown from more than four jurisdictions, usually including the Commonwealth, and the States and Territories of the Australian Federation, which meet on a regular basis for the purpose of intergovernmental consultation and cooperation, joint policy development and joint action between governments’ (Q’land Gov., n.d., n.p.).

Prime Minister Bruce established the Loans Council (1923), and the Advisory Council of Science and Industry (1926), the forerunner of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

This marked the beginning of ‘joint decision-making forums’ (Jones, 2008, 7). Also of relevance to this chapter is his establishment in 1926 of the Federal Health Council—the precursor to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)—following a Royal Commission’s recommendations. Membership of the Council then consisted of the Commonwealth Director General of Health and the Chief Health Officer of each State (Radi, 1979; Painter, 1998, 105-110). These are examples of coordinated federalism—the states and the Commonwealth working together.

Labor’s James Scullin, Prime Minister during the period 1929-32 had the misfortune of being in office at the time of the onset of the Great Depression, only weeks after coming to office. The rapid international onset of the Great Depression drastically impacted on heavily indebted Australia. Scullin and his Treasurer, Edward (Ted) Theodore, responded by developing several plans during 1930 and 1931 to repay foreign debt, provide relief to farmers and create economic stimulus to curb unemployment based on deficit spending and expansionary monetary policy. The conservative-dominated Senate abruptly blocked these plans.

Earlier, buoyed by their electoral success, elements of the Scullin Government pushed for greater Commonwealth control. Indeed, some Members went as far to urge the abolition of state parliaments altogether. Dr William Robert Maloney, Labor Member for Melbourne proposed a Bill for a referendum which would mean the end of states (CofA, 1930, vol. 15, 1068). Maloney was a long-standing Labor Member, interested in education, eugenics and child welfare (Serle 1986).

Then there was Rowley James, Labor Member for Hunter (1928-31, who spoke in support of the Bill, *vis-à-vis* Debating the Constitution Alteration (Power of Amendment Bill). He claimed ‘each State administers its own railways, and has its own commissioner for railways. Each State administers its own tramways, has it own education department, its own lands, mines, and taxation departments, and its own arbitration system’ (CofA, Parl.

Debates, 1930, No. 14, 194). Moreover, he believed, 'that the present proposals of the Government should be simplified, and a straight-out unification issue placed before the people' (CofA, Parl. Debates, 1930, No. 14, 194).

Debating the same bill, and according to John McNeill, Labor Member for Wannon, the Deputy Opposition Leader, H.S. Gullett, claimed: 'I believe with the present Government in power, education would probably be taken over from the States during the life of the present Parliament' (CofA, Parl. Debates, 1930, No. 14, 854). Clearly, within the Scullin Government there was a mood for increased Commonwealth involvement in education. While Maloney's Referendum Bill did not get the necessary support, there were other developments.

Ministerial councils enabled the inter-war governments to reach out into school education. In their work on comparative federalism, Hueglin and Fenna (2006) show how the growth of ministerial councils flowed from the soon-defunct Inter-State Commission earlier flagged by the Founding Fathers. Under the Bruce Government, first came the Loan Council, which resulted from a referendum, 'which gained the exclusive right to manage public debt and borrowing of both the states and the Commonwealth' (Hueglin & Fenna, 2006, 228).

Scullin was able to establish the ACER. Influential in its establishment was the Carnegie Corporation, a US organisation created in 1911 to promote knowledge and understanding to 'sandbag' capitalist societies, provided grants to benefit the people of the United States. Some Carnegie funds could be used for the same purpose in countries that were, or had been, members of the British Commonwealth. At the time of the Great Depression many policy makers perceived Australia was under threat from Bolshevism. The grant to establish ACER was made following a visit to Australia by American James Russell on behalf of the Carnegie Corporation in order to assess the state of education in Australia and investigate appropriate means of assistance (Connell, 1980; Williams, 1994; Robertson, 1988).

Meanwhile there were other developments *vis-à-vis* Federal Labor's leverage through the Commonwealth on school education. Australian society and economy were about to undergo massive developments. With the prospect of his government facing bankruptcy, Scullin advanced the Premiers' Plan, a conservative measure meeting the crisis with severe cutbacks in government spending. Again, in response, Labor imploded. The cuts severely affected pensioners and other core Labor constituencies, leading to a widespread revolt and multiple defections in parliament. Labor again showed its lemming-like capacity, and after several months of infighting the government collapsed and the newly formed United Australia Party (UAP) under the Tasmanian ex-school teacher, Joseph Lyons, took power at the subsequent 1931 election. A devout Catholic, Lyons had 'ratted' on his earlier commitment to Labor, the party which brought him to political prominence (Robertson, 1988).

The new party was basically the Nationalist Party under a new name, and Lyons was chosen as leader of the party. With his Labor background and his strong Catholic beliefs, Nationalists believed he could win traditional Labor support groups—working-class voters and Irish Catholics—over to the new party (Hart & Lloyd, 1986). The opportunistic Lyons immediately obliged.

Federal Labor, however, soon was to complete yet more self-destruction. In March, at about the same time as Lyons led his group of defectors from the right of the Labor Party across the floor, five left-wing New South Wales Labor MPs, supporters of New South Wales Premier Jack Lang, also split from the official Labor Party over the government's economic policies, forming a 'Lang Labor' group on the cross-benches, including Maloney from the seat of Melbourne, and costing the government its majority in the House of Representatives. Late in the year, the Langite MPs supported a UAP no-confidence motion and brought the government down, forcing an early election (Hart & Lloyd, 1986).

At the 1931 election, Lyons and the UAP offered stable, orthodox financial policies, and portrayed an image of putting national unity above class conflict. Lyons had a trustworthy persona, often portrayed as a teddy bear by the nation's cartoonists. He was a working-class man leading a party comprising largely middle- and upper-class conservatives, while Labor remained split between the official party and the Langites. The result was a huge victory for the UAP, taking thirty-four seats against eighteen seats for the two wings of the Labor Party combined. With a more settled economy and political climate, the Lyons Coalition Government established another ministerial council relevant to this research—the Australian Education Council (AEC) in 1936 (Hart & Lloyd, 1986). There was sufficient political support and momentum here to warrant Commonwealth leverage on school education, all under the banner of cooperative federalism.

The first meeting of the new NHMRC was held in February 1937 and *inter alia* was instrumental in establishing the national capital network of Lady Gowrie schools whose presence lives on into the twenty-first century. With Lyons' death, Sir Earle Page from the Country Party, and soon after Robert Menzies from the UAP took the prime ministership. During this time the National Fitness Council was established under the leadership of the Canadian, Gordon Young, who wielded a long-standing influence on school education in New South Wales. These activities represented subtle, but nevertheless, powerful Commonwealth incursions into school education.

The changing face of federalism

The Great War had brought unimaginable pressures on the Commonwealth, accompanied by massive expansions of Commonwealth powers through defence imperatives. After the war, conservative Commonwealth governments attempted to return to a system of coordinate federalism. However, the Australian Commonwealth faced other necessities. Under conservative governments, a system of co-operative federalism developed in the 1920s and 1930s in response to both internal and external pressures. Outcomes of cooperative federalism included: The establishment of the Australian Loan Council in response to intergovernmental competition in

the loan markets; the coordination of economic management and budgetary policies during the Great Depression; and the establishment of joint consultative bodies, usually in the form of ministerial councils. Some of these brought with them increased Commonwealth involvement in Australian school education—the NHMRC, NFC, ACER, and the AEC. There were, however, other socio-cultural *zeitgeist* affecting this increased involvement.

Zeitgeist: the panic of the perceived Bolshevik ogre; paranoia about the Japanese

Similar to more recent twenty-first century national media-manufactured panics, the national panic in Australia surrounding the Bolshevik Revolution was echoed in the press radio and film. A notable immediate response to Red October and the Bolshevik Revolution a few months later was how Australian school education took an immediate stance, linking arms with democratic/capitalist systems and values. For example, at the July 1919 conference of the Tasmanian Teachers Union held in Launceston, delegates resolved the Department of Education should maintain and extend its commitment to the further establishment of school and civic playgrounds. *The Mercury* supported the idea.

With the Armistice only months behind them, in an editorial, *The Mercury* reminded the Tasmanian public the English-speaking races were characterised by an inborn love of sport which found expression in a general belief in ‘a fair go’, and this had played a mighty role in the overthrow of militarism in Europe. The paper also stated the nations practising collective disciplinary sports and pastimes in which personal initiative combined with organised movement featured were responsible for conquering the Germans. German recreations had mainly been mechanical and gymnastic in style, lacking teamwork perceived as being so necessary for winning wars. After the war, both state and private schools increased the size of their sports fields. Team sport activities in schools greatly increased. This was paralleled by a decrease in the advocacy of special playground equipment

such as swings and seesaws. (*The Mercury*, 1919, cited in Rodwell, 1998a, 169)

The end of the Great War intensified the eugenic influence on the various Australian playground associations, with the intensity of a moral panic, all demanding a return to the construction of civil playgrounds run by professional supervisors. While civic playgrounds gradually grew in number, the idea of supervised playgrounds failed to develop. For example, in Victoria by 1927 there were seventy-two equipped playgrounds throughout the state, but only five had play leaders. Certainly, the stringent economic conditions of the 1930s interrupted the progress of the provision of playgrounds. In a series of articles in the early issues of *Australian Childhood* during 1930, the pioneering early childhood educator, Martha Simpson, decried the lack of civic pride and foresight by civic authorities and the population-at-large in neglecting their responsibilities in this regard, despite the many overseas examples cited by her, children's access to playgrounds in Australia, for many decades to come, was limited to what school and civic authorities saw fit to provide. It was only during the late 1930s through the injection of Commonwealth funds through the CNF that civic playgrounds received national consideration and Commonwealth funding. Consequently, in his lectures to his students at the University of Sydney's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Professor Harvey Sutton rejoiced at these developments and related them to the imperatives of race motherhood, and the fight against delinquency (Rodwell, 1998a, Chap. 7).

In reviewing the achievement of the 1919 annual Tasmanian Teachers' Union conference, in a lengthy editorial *The Mercury* described the most important role of schools and school playgrounds in postwar reconstruction:

We cannot afford, no Australian State can afford, to have our schools converted into agencies for making Bolsheviks or citizens of any other class that will be prejudicial to the best interests of Australia. All over the world this question of the fruit to be borne by the trees we plant is being looked at in a different way from ever before. Who

does not realise in his or her own case the extreme and lifelong importance of the impressions made upon the mind in the early years. If we want people to grow up in our country to give us trouble in the future, citizens who will be anti-Australian, anti-British, anti-religious, anti-moral, anti-industrious, insubordinate, querulous, unsteady, lazy, violent, reckless, led by extremists, led by people who hypnotise them or govern them through ignorant fears and silly theories that happiness is always to be in the next world and not this (*The Mercury*, 1919, 3).

The anti-Bolshevik moral panic had parallels with orchestrated moral panics of the Howard and Abbott-Turnbull governments, which this research addresses in Chapters Nine and Ten. There were deep underpinning anxieties of the period often expressed in the media as exemplified above, and often in popular culture and literature.

The anti-Bolshevik discourse of the beforementioned *Mercury* editorial was replicated in all establishment newspapers during the interwar period. For example, George Maxwell, a Melbourne-based Nationalist (Conservative) MHR, on 13 May 1924 under the sub-heading of ‘The Australian Type’ delivered a tirade against the Bolshevik ‘menace’: ‘Communists in Australia, he remarked, only played at communism at present. They used revolutionary phrases and made revolutionary speeches but in their actions they were harmless. The Communist party in Australia talked a tremendous lot and its talk was dangerous’ (*Argus*, 1924, 3). This anti-Bolshevism pervaded Australian public discourse for the interwar period, until it was eclipsed by a paranoia concerning Japan during the late 1930s.

Meaney’s (1996) study of Commonwealth intelligence experts’ work on researching and managing Australia’s relationship with Japan during the interwar period highlights the ‘fears and phobias’ of the Australian population towards Japan particularly during the late 1930s. Meaney (1996, 37) noted: ‘Britain and the British Commonwealth were being confronted by the Fascist powers in Europe at the very time they were being estranged from Japan in the Pacific’. Indeed, for Meaney (1996): ‘The new international circumstances revived the alarms which had dominated Australia’s defence planning in the decade prior to World War One’. Now,

Meaney (1996, 37) explained: ‘The British Empire had to contemplate the possibility of being engaged in a war on two fronts, in Europe and the Far East, and in this case Australia would be unable to rely on the assistance of the Royal Navy for its protection ... Australia’s danger was now much greater than in the earlier period’. Australian defence was in a perilous state: ‘Since World War One, Britain’s power had declined relative to that of Japan, imperialists had greater influence over the Japanese government, the United States was determinedly isolationist and there was no longer an Anglo-Japanese alliance’ (Meaney, 1996, 38). Australia, therefore, ‘had no choice but to look to its own resources for its salvation’ (Meaney, 1996, 38).

On the home front, however, the media and the government were making full play with propaganda to ‘manage’ this paranoia. Based on her PhD research, Murray’s (2004) research showed how the Australian media, now making full use of radio, manufactured news about Japanese-Australia relationships.

It is questionable whether or not the Australian media representation of Japan from 1931 to the fall of Singapore in February 1942 served Australian public interest. In brief, Murray (2004) concluded through what purported to be news, but in fact, was little more than propaganda, ‘the media had betrayed the Australian people and the national interest, through cynicism, alcoholic journalists who knew little about China and Japan, poorly qualified correspondents with a lack of foreign experience, and Australia’s dependence on overseas sources—particularly Japanese and even Nazi German sources’ (Kolb, 2006, n.p.). The end result was, however, the engendering of fear in the Australian population.

Zeitgeist: progressivism

Developing militarism and a gradual acceptance of Australia’s reliance on the declining British hegemony in Asia meant the big ideas dominating Australia were changing during the 1930s. This, however, was not the only factor leading to a new *zeitgeist*. Roe’s 1984 landmark study of the influence of progressivism, or vitalism, on Australia’s socio-political

showed the core of progressivism were the efficiency dynamic and an increase in government control to ensure this efficiency—at all three levels of government. Efficiency required research and coordinated action, and the nurturing of professional elites.

Roe's (1984, 11) Introduction to his study of nine Australian progressives attempts a summary of the principal features of this 'new consciousness' influencing the Australian social planners of the mid-war years:

Efficiency became the touchstone of all things. Progressives, true to Nietzsche-Bergson-James, repudiated all notions of fixed and determinist systems of knowledge. But they were emphatic (some of them, fanatic) in their confidence in applied learning. Not only science in the specific sense, but any and every aspect of scholarship and enquiry could only justify itself through capacity for problem solving. The way to this was itself 'scientific': Progressives were ardent collectors of data concerning natural and human phenomena. Thence must come guides for effective action, to be pursued by bureaucratic and other elites.

Progressives urged governments for ever-increasing interference in policy development. Where necessary, the Commonwealth needed to interfere in state activities—wherever the limits of federalism permitted it to do so. Often national efficiency embodied eugenic ideals. Roe's study immediately was accompanied by a host of other works in a like vein, including Garton (1986a; 1986b; 1994).

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Government policies aimed at strengthening Australia's physical fitness is a common theme and aspiration of this period, and none more fascinating than the history of Health Weeks, and annual event in all Australian capital cities. Schools often played central roles in these spectacles aimed at public education (Rodwell, 1999). Through Australian schools and working through state departments of health, the Commonwealth could do much to encourage an improved physical fitness amongst Australian youth.

Established in 1926, the NHMRC was one such Commonwealth ministerial council having a direct influence on school education. Through state departments of health, the NHMRC introduced physical culture in schools through Health Week displays (Rodwell, 1999).

Following the Great War, the eugenic ideals and practices of the English nursery schools, founded by Rachel and Margaret McMillan, became manifest in Australia. Open-air education, diet, systematic measurement of children's physical and psychological development, were all hallmarks of the nursery school system, a system the Commonwealth sponsored for Australian families (Stevinson, 1923; de Lissa, 1939). Moreover, mothers were expected to change their child-rearing practices according to these developments. An early example was developments at Sydney's Blackfriars Infant Demonstration School. Here, an 'experiment in health education' was begun during February 1921. The aim was to enable the school to be an agent in the improvement of children's health (Rodwell, 1998b, chap. 3).

Similarly, the Commonwealth Department of Health influenced early childhood education through the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, modelled on the Blackfriars experiment, one of which was opened in each of Australia's capital cities in 1940. The centres were designed as lighthouses for Australian early childhood education, and were liberally staffed with a team of professionals employed part- and full-time, including teachers, a nurse and a social worker. These professionals worked together in child study, a central purpose of the institutions. Within the Commonwealth Department of Health, Christine Heinig was the executive officer responsible for the centres (Rodwell, 1998b, chap. 3).

Heinig's 1944 report on the Lady Gowrie Centres described at great length the architecture of the buildings. This was an architecture facilitating surveillance of the children by the team of professionals working there. The children's behaviour, habits and development were observed and recorded on most elaborate charts, including such attributes as 'honesty of thought', 'honesty towards ourselves', and 'honesty and character traits. Children's

physical development and health were measured and recorded regularly (Rodwell, 1998a, chap. 3).

In summary, in a vein similar to the manner in which the Australian family was modernised during the interwar period as described by Reiger (1984), the Commonwealth Lady Gowrie Centres similarly exerted an influence on Australian schooling. Now, early childhood education was being medicalised and modernised through the lighthouse influences of the Lady Gowrie Centres. Since their founding these centres have grown in number. For example, Tasmania now has thirty centres offering a variety of early childhood services (Lady Gowrie Tasmania: n.d., n.p.).

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (1930)

The growth in the application of psychology as an instrument of educational management in Australia's department of education came with the foundation of the ACER. With Dr Kenneth Cunningham as Director, and backed by Carnegie Corporation funds, the institution quickly threw its weight behind the assumption those children 'best fitted' to receive the scarce resources of state-provided secondary education should do so (Haller, 1963, 123, 129). The Carnegie Corporation had already established a strong record in supporting eugenic endeavours and anti-Bolshevik programs, such as public libraries in the United States, Australia and elsewhere (for Australia, see M. White, 1997). Cunningham led the ACER off on a massive program of psychometric test compilation for Australian state schools (Connell, 1980).

Politicians and policy-makers have long used the ACER as an instrument to achieve their ends. For example, in June 2011, Christopher Pyne, Opposition Education spokesperson on education in the House of Representatives quoted the ACER at least twice in advancing an argument against a national senior secondary certificate (CoA, House of Reps, 2011, 6294).

During the early-1930s, with the establishment of the state institutes of educational research operating under the auspices of the ACER, and through the ACER program of secondment of teachers from state Departments of Education, Cunningham was able to sponsor a culture of psychometric testing and educational research in the Australian states. With his appointment in 1935 to the newly established position of Research Officer for the New South Wales Department of Education, Harold Wyndham spearheaded the psychometric testing movement in that state (Connell, 1980; Barcan, 1988, 218).

Through the 1930s until the 1960s, most Australian primary schools were organised according to children's intellectual ability. On this basis children also were streamed into the secondary schools, with the selective high schools, which in turn were organised on academic ability, supplying the bulk of student teachers for the state teachers' colleges. As primary school children competed for the scarce resources of the selective high schools, and as these in turn competed for the scarce resources of teachers' colleges positions, psychometric testing became socially constructed from a middle-class perspective. In short, the ACER tests defined what was an intelligent adolescent, and who was worthy to sit for the matriculation or Leaving Certificate examination (McCallum, 1990, chaps 4, 5).

Psychometric testing had a massive effect on Australian teacher selection and preparation (Rodwell, 2003). With the ACER's work on this form of testing throughout Australian school education, before students ever received their high school principal's stamp of approval, gained their state-sponsored student-teachers' studentship and enrolled in a college, they had been through years of screening and sorting according to criteria established by the state through the ACER (Connell, 1980).

When Menzies (1961) made an observation concerning rural education at the second annual conference of the Australian College of Education, *inter alia*, he spoke on Commonwealth-state relations in respect to education.

Using metaphors drawn from physics, he claimed the Australian Constitution was under a constant tension—between a movement to centralise (federal) control, labelling them centripetal forces, and a movement away from the centre—back to the states and territories—labelling these centrifugal. If the Commonwealth’s influence over education in respect to the states and territories is any index, he was wholly correct. National economic and defence imperatives were at stake and there were massive enrolment pressures on Australia’s schools.

The ACER, however, also influenced other aspects of Australian schooling. Its influence also came in rural education. In 1961, Australia’s economy continued to be based on pastoralism, and continued improvements in agriculture and pastoralism were vitally important. Despite education being a state province, the Commonwealth could do its bit. To illustrate his point, Menzies (1961), for example, used ACER-assisted Tasmanian Area Schools, established at Sheffield and Hagley during 1935 (Rodwell, 1998b). Menzies (1961, 4) claimed: ‘When I first met them, years ago, I was much impressed—as I still am—by the Tasmanian Area Schools, with their special studies for boys who were going on the land. I saw great common sense in this’.

By 2015, with its headquarters in Camberwell, Victoria, and with offices in Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Dubai and India and financially self-sufficient, born in an era of cooperative federalism, the ACER has exercised an expansive and long-term influence on many aspects of Australian schooling and education. It continued as a success story of the Commonwealth using its resources in a cooperative manner under the auspices the notion of a ministerial council to assist and guide states and territories in their systems of schooling and education (ACER: Corporate Profile, n.d.). While falling under the spell of economic rationalism with the quitting of federal funding and the installation of self-funding through competitive research grant, with the quest for entrepreneurialism its direction had changed.

The Australian Education Council (AEC) (1936)

COAG met in December 2013 and agreed to new Council arrangements, including the SCSEEC, mentioned in Chapter Three. SCSEEC would be one of eight under the new COAG Council system. For decades it operated under the nomenclature of the Australian Council of Education, having its origins in the pre-war Coalition Government.

The Commonwealth, states and territories established, and have maintained, a dialogue *vis-à-vis* education and schooling through the AEC. The Lyons Coalition Government established the AEC in 1936 (Spaull, 1987). The establishment of the AEC was innocent enough, evolving from a meeting called in March 1936 by David Drummond, NSW Minister of Education. The purpose of the meeting was to enlist Commonwealth financial support for technical education. Harold Wyndham, Cunningham's collaborator from the NSW Department of Education, was installed as the inaugural secretary of the Council. It comprised all state ministers of education with a standing committee of their directors of education. The AEC sent a deputation to the Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, urgently seeking grants-in-aid to the states to step up technical training in view of the likelihood of war but was 'turned down flat' (J.P. Hughes, 2002, 5). Little else emerged from the committee until the Commonwealth was faced with the imperatives of postwar reconstruction. For the intervening years, 'one observer claimed the meetings had been little more than a "holiday" in which very little forward planning was done' (J.P. Hughes, 2002, 5).

The National Fitness Council (NFC) (1938)

During the interwar years, the Commonwealth sustained its influence on physical education in schools. It was instrumental in 1938 in the development of eugenic-inspired state programs to train specialist physical education teachers (Kirk & Twigg, 1994). The moral panic of the perceived physical degeneration of school children prompted the Commonwealth Advisory Council of Nutrition through the Commonwealth Department of Health to conduct research on the physical condition of school children in

rural New South Wales. This research was supported by research by Harvey Sutton from the University of Sydney and a colleague from the University of Melbourne. The results of the research, according to T.E. Hornibrook, later principal of North Sydney Boys' Technical High School—a selective school—writing in *Education* showed an 'appalling racial degeneration', with its, 'pernicious effects being cumulative and ever-increasing' (Hornibrook, 1938, cited in Rodwell, 1998b, 231).

The journal *Education* reported the Commonwealth Minister for Health, Billy Hughes, as stating 'whatever steps are necessary to ensure conditions favourable to a virile and numerous population must be taken in hand without delay. We cannot afford to breed weaklings' (Hornibrook, 1938, cited in Rodwell, 1998b, 231-2). The editor of *Education* was using this evidence as a part of a continuing campaign to induce the state government to give financial support to improve the health of rural children, and to improve educational facilities in these areas. Of course, in 1938 behind these eugenic statements concerning racial degeneration was a defence imperative. The political opportunity came early in the following year.

Lyons died in office in April 1939 four months before the outbreak of the war. Convened under imperatives of national fitness and defence, in 1939 the NFC had its first meeting and defined its objectives. Its primary role was to 'act as a co-ordinating agency to ensure the improvement of the state of individual physical fitness throughout Australia on a national basis', and to co-operate with governments at various levels and any state council for physical fitness for the education of public opinion in the need for physical fitness, and the general promotion of physical fitness in the community (Cunningham & Pratt, 1940, 37, cited in Rodwell, 1998a, 231-2). This included financial support for facilities. It would assist in the training of specialist physical education teachers.

The NFC did not overlook what it perceived to be the connection between physical fitness and race motherhood. It sought to educate public opinion about, 'the part played in the building of the body by the adequate care and

feeding of the expectant and nursing mother'; and 'the high importance of right nutrition at all stages of growth and development' (Cunningham & Pratt, 1940, 37, cited in Rodwell, 1998b, 231-2). Along with various ministers representing the states, in July 1939, the Council dispersed Commonwealth money. An amount of £1000 [\$2000] per annum for five years was voted to each state for the employment of an organiser and for incidental expenses. Amounts ranging from £1000 [\$2000] to £2000 [\$4000] were voted to each of Australia's six universities for either scholarships or lectureships in physical education. A sum of £20,000 [\$40,000] was left in the hands of the Commonwealth Minister for Health 'for application in the Federal Territories and for other national purposes in connection with the campaign' (Cunningham & Pratt, 1940, 38, cited in Rodwell, 1998b, 232; also see National Fitness Campaign, 1939).

These developments were reported into regional Australia. For example, the *Burnie Advocate* reported 'the Australian Educational Council declared 'in community education', useful and economical approach to the question might be made, among others, through:

- Education of the community to appreciate the need for physical education.
- Co-ordination and expansion of activities of organisations working in allied fields.
- Supplementation of the work of organisations.
- Provision of expert guidance, especially in matters of nutrition.
- Provision of competent instructors and supervisors' (*The Advocate*, 1939, p. 3).

Through necessities determined by an approaching war, the Commonwealth, *inter alia*, commenced support for the training of physical education teachers. The Council of Physical Education organisational arrangements in New South Wales comprised: 'In September 1939 His Excellency the Governor with the advice of the Executive Council approved, as constituted, a State Council of Physical Fitness for New South Wales' (Council of Physical Education, 1939-1940, 1). Moreover, 'during 1940 the Council of Physical Fitness became known as the National Fitness

Council of New South Wales, as a result of the Commonwealth National Fitness Bill' (Council of Physical Education, 1939-1940, 1). Additionally, 'it has the provision that the National Fitness Council in each State would be the active agency to implement a policy of activities in the interests of the National Fitness Campaign throughout the Commonwealth' (Council of Physical Education, 1939-1940, 1).

Analysis and conclusions

At a national level, when compared with developments during other periods of federalism, the initiatives undertaken during the interwar period of cooperative federalism have produced some notable long-lasting and profound results. Of course, there were political imperatives during these decades, but unlike other periods of Commonwealth leverage on states and territories in their schooling and education, these did little to polarise public opinion.

How do we interpret these Commonwealth initiatives in early childhood, primary and secondary school education? Was it progress, or simply interference by the state in the lives of working-class families? While evolutionary idealist may argue for it all being progress, they must do so by well-qualified examples. Certainly, these Commonwealth initiatives constituted progress, but they also constituted political interference in the daily lives of working-class families. Perhaps, to contend these changes fitted the neo-Marxist paradigm would be a little extreme, but nevertheless, the state was putting school educational measures in place shaping the national efficiency of working-class children. However, working-class children would benefit in ways other than that which solely suited the state. These students became the parents of children, who as young adults, as with the author of this research, attended teachers' colleges in the 1950s and 1960s. Conceivably, all this is another case for the strength of a social conflict paradigm of educational historiography.

There was political opportunity for all these actions by the Commonwealth into school education. It was not simply a matter of a compassionate government establishing ministerial councils within the framework of cooperative federalism, and then benevolently making budgetary provisions to provide for initiatives in certain provisions in school education. In every instance in the Commonwealth's establishment of the NHMRC, the ACER, the AEC and the NFC, the *zeitgeist* of Bolshevist fear, national efficiency and finally Australia's isolationist position from encroaching moral panic of a Japanese invasion, conservative governments sought to intervene in the limited manner afforded by cooperative federalism.

Concurring with what has been written concerning Commonwealth encroachment into schooling in this chapter, to the trained eye and mind of an erudite contemporary observer such as Cunningham, he could write 'with minor exceptions the federal Government does not enter the field of education' (Cunningham & Pratt, 1940, 73, cited in Harman & Smart, 1982, 1).

In the face of possible Japanese invasion, the moral panic concerning the perceived problem was a deteriorating level of national fitness. The degree in which the Commonwealth could respond, given the tight limitations imposed by federalism, was through legislation enabling ministerial councils. These were the two streams feeding into Kingdon's model: the problem, the political moment and the solution. Given the dominant notions of cooperative federalism, the political will came with the establishment of ministerial councils, *inter alia* allowing for Commonwealth leverage on aspects of schooling. Out flowed the policies associated with the various ministerial councils discussed above.

Determined by the imperatives of cooperative federalism and the quest for national efficiency in the face of an approaching war, at arms length through its ministerial councils the Commonwealth assisted in the development of school physical education, race motherhood through Lady Gowrie infant schools. Referred to as progress, these were supplements to existing state

provisions, most likely perceived in positive terms in providing what cash-strapped state budgets could not provide. For most, they certainly were not perceived as an intrusion by the Commonwealth into a state jurisdiction. Overwhelmingly, these Commonwealth engagements with school education were portrayed as progress by the media.

We need to remind ourselves of the three strands of federalism—legal, financial and political. In respect to the legal strand, Commonwealth ministerial councils could hardly warrant a High Court challenge, given the low-level of political opposition to these initiatives. Given the dire financial situation of the Commonwealth and the states caused by the Great Depression any small Commonwealth handout to assist school education was welcomed by the states. Through the Commonwealth ministerial councils, these initiatives were, indeed, quite inert affairs, and the product of a benevolent Commonwealth. At least that was the way in which evolutionary idealist educational historians, such as Barcan (1980) would have them described.

Using Kingdon's (1984/2003) model for policy development and implementation, given the *zeitgeist* of eugenic inspired national fitness emanating from a general drive towards progressivism and national efficiency, as defined by Roe (1984, 9-12), and given the conservative governments of the period, ministerial councils seem now to be a logical outcome. National progress was defined in terms of national efficiency, and that required governments—state and federal—working cooperative to enhance the fitness of the population.

Given these limitations, the Commonwealth was able to engage with school education through ministerial councils, jointly attended by relevant Commonwealth and state ministers. Granted additional financial leverage through the acquisition of income tax, the Commonwealth would be able to achieve much more in future decades.

CHAPTER SIX

Pragmatic Federalism: Post-war Imperatives and the Menzies Years, Coalition Governments (1949-72)

Introduction

While the World War I brought untold tragedy and trauma to vast numbers of Australian families, the manifest trauma of World War II came much closer to home, with attacks from Japanese submarines along the East Coast, and repeated Japanese bombings of northern strategic military centres, including Darwin. Postwar reconstruction would be vast in its infrastructure, as infrastructure was renewed and service people retrained and settled back into the workforce.

The Chifley Labor Government (1945-1949) introduced such postwar reconstruction projects as the General Motors Holden plant in Adelaide's northern suburbs and the Snowy Mountains Scheme. It was, however, the Menzies conservative Coalition Government (1949-1966) which dominated the period. True to his socialist roots, Chifley believed in strong state intervention. Menzies, the opposite: Private enterprise should lead national reconstruction. For Menzies, a desirable Commonwealth government was a small, non-interventionist government, and certainly one which had little leverage on public school education.

In an epoch in which Labor was distracted by internal squabbling, with many Catholic Labor voters siding off politically with the DLP, splitting the Labor vote, and Menzies capitalising on this in the midst of cold war fears

of communism at home, the Menzies Coalition had much of it all to its own. The Commonwealth was very unlikely to intervene in public school education—that is, unless its vote was threatened. Commonwealth intervention in school education came about as quickly as it allowed the introduction of TV to Australia (1956). The emergence of Gough Whitlam and his ilk in Labor as it threatened to win back the wayward Catholic vote would do much to move the Coalition Federal government to intervene in school education, and make use of its political leverage brought about by the Curtin Labor Government's win on income tax in 1942.

It was a period dominated by a *zeitgeist* of postwar paranoia and moral panics, communism and the domino theory of advancing communism through South-East Asia. True to Kingdon's (1984/2003) model, policies associated with Commonwealth intervention in school education would only come when there was a critical political moment.

Zeitgeist: paranoia, communism and the domino theory

In the 1950s and 1960s the general fear and anxiety of the 'red menace' was accompanied by a fear of invasion. More recently, from a conservative perspective, Howard's (2014) *Menzies* examined the politics of these national fears and anxieties in his 'Saved by Santamaria' chapter.

B.A. Santamaria, who former Prime Minister Tony Abbott lists as 'my first political mentor', was a key person in generating these national fears and anxieties concerning the communist threat (Abbott, 2009, xiii). Santamaria's public stature continued to grow during the 1960s and 1970s, through his regular column in *The Australian* newspaper and his regular TV spot, *Point of View*. Sir Frank Packer, owner of the Nine Network, gave him free air time, signalling Packer's interests in maintaining the influence of the DLP and the split Labor vote—a point sidestepped by Howard (2014) in his chapter. A skilled journalist and broadcaster, Santamaria was one of the most articulate voices of Australian conservatism for more than twenty years. He also championed government assistance for Catholic schools and colleges (R. Hughes, 1997).

Howard's (2014) 'Saved by Santamaria' chapter affirms just how close the Menzies Government came to losing to Arthur Calwell's Labor in the 1961 election. Menzies crept back into office with a one-seat majority, and would not have achieved that with the assistance of DLP preferences, particularly in Victoria—the 'jewel on Liberal's crown'. Howard (2014) recorded how the DLP ran a highly emotive campaign playing on these national fears and anxieties. For example, the DLP ran advertisements in national newspapers declaring there were 'Six More Reasons why Khrushchev [Chairman of the USSR] should be pleased with the Australian Labor Party' (Howard, 2014, 297).

I grew up in the New South Wales Central Tablelands, went to school in the 1950s and lived through these national phobias and nightmares. TV arrived in my small town in 1958. Before that, the Movietone News at the local Saturday afternoon cinema provided me with the visual news. This was the cold war period in Australia, a period of the arrival of the atomic bomb, communism and the 'domino' theory of South East Asian countries tumbling in the advance of the 'Communist North'. As children we had our own plans for the imminent invasion of the Reds. My friends and I would hide in a secret cave in the Kanangra Boyd National Park.

Through Movietone News, and later a very 'snowy' TV reception, I learnt of a guided missile range near Woomera in South Australia, atomic testing in the Monte Bello Islands in Western Australia and at Maralinga and Emu Field in South Australia, and US spy bases in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory (*National Archives of Australia*. (n.d.)). Then there was the Petrov Affair (1954), about which at the time I understood very little, except to learn there were Russian spies in Australia, and Mr Menzies was going to save us—as long as people continued to vote for him.

The Menzies decades and the politics of postwar reconstruction

Menzies and his Coalition Parties won the 1949 election from Chifley's Labor in an election marked by industrial relations issues, communist fears at home and overseas, and the first public airing of the domino theory. Menzies retired from office in January 1966 during the time of Australian deployment of troops to the Vietnam War. The Coalition government continued through to Whitlam's Labor victory in December 1972. During that latter period, Harold Holt (1966-67), John Gorton (1968-71) and William McMahon (1971-72) had a period as prime minister. Clearly, Menzies prime ministership dominated this period.

Key political issues during the period included a dispirited and divided Labor Party in Opposition, industrial relations with communism a key component, and the cold war dominating foreign and domestic affairs, and later, a resurgent ALP under Whitlam and an increasingly dispirited Coalition.

Menzies' biographer, Martin (2000), agreed: 'Menzies had always used denunciations of communism in domestic industrial upsets as part of his political stock-in-trade, and he continued to do so' (n.p.). However, 'his fears took on a new dimension in 1947-48, as he absorbed from experience abroad a sinister sense of communist parties being potential fifth columns' (Martin, 2000, n.p.). Indeed, 'this sense did not leave him, bolstering his acceptance of the Cold-War belief that communist plans for the destruction of capitalism were worldwide and directed by Joseph Stalin and the Soviet dictatorship' (Martin, 2000, n.p.).

Martin (2000, n.p.) conceded during and after Menzies' long term as Prime Minister there was a commonly held belief Menzies, 'built his subsequent career on cynically "kicking the communist can" ', but argued this, 'is a shallow one'. However, this remains a contested viewpoint.

Menzies and a changing federalism

Tax competition after the start of World War II ended the period of inter-government co-operation. Previously, the constitutional framework on tax allowed both the Commonwealth and states to levy taxes. However, pushed by wartime imperatives in 1942, the Commonwealth introduced legislation to give it a monopoly on income taxes. Using the Section 96 grants power, it did this by providing financial grants to states on the condition they did not collect their own income taxes. The validity of this scheme was upheld twice in the High Court (Crowe & Stephenson, 2014). Uniform income taxation levied by the Commonwealth became the principal instrument of Commonwealth financial domination and VFI in the Australian federal system. Consequently, the states were deprived of a major revenue sources.

In reviewing Howard's (2014, 12) study of the Menzies era in Australian political life, Cater (2014) insisted 'Menzies, not Whitlam, put an end to Australia's intellectual isolation from Asia by instituting military, trade, diplomatic, educational and cultural links'. Indeed, for Cater (2014, 12) using Howard's (2014) words Menzies' investment in universities 'transformed the funding, and the reach of higher education'. This was done through specific purpose grants for Commonwealth Science Laboratories. Further, Menzies ended a century of discrimination against Catholic schools by introducing direct Commonwealth aid.

Considering the impact of Colombo Plan, in a sense Cater (2014) is correct in asserting this about connecting Australia with South-East Asia. The Colombo Plan made some impact on Australian school education in respect to appreciation for multiculturalism. Of course, few commentators would contest Cater's point regarding the impact of Menzies' policies on Australian universities, but I will argue below its impact was very selective, and for the benefit of particular Australian socio-economic groups.

Readers, however, will recall a prime motive behind Howard's (2014) writing of his *Menzies Era* was to right the perceived wrongs of an alleged hitherto left-wing dominated narrative of this era. Cater (2014, 12) wrote

from the perspective of the right-wing Menzies Research Centre. He went on to state: ‘Graham Freudenberg [Whitlam’s speech writer and biographer] described Menzies as the exploiter of Australian conservatism, a leader ‘who never made the mistake of raising expectations’ and whose ‘great skill lay in never despising the obvious’. On the other hand, for Cater (2014, 12), ‘Donald Horne [another left-wing historian] portrayed Menzies and his generation as ‘antediluvian, nurtured in backwater, strongly provincial. He and Arthur Calwell, said Horne, were ‘exiles in their own country’. Just as Cater is from the opposite of the political divide, Freudenberg and Horne were Whitlam champions, and very erudite in their various left-wing interpretations of Australian history (Freudenberg, 2009; Horne, 2000).

Post-war reconstruction and increased Commonwealth leverage through ministerial councils

With the imperatives of school education’s role in postwar reconstruction and in promoting science education in the wake of the cold war and the Soviet’s perceived lead in science, by the 1960s the ACER was spreading its wings, becoming involved in science education. The 1967 Junior Secondary Science Project (JSSP) was a Victorian-based initiative of the ACER, directed to lower secondary classes (Cohen & Fraser, 1987). It enjoyed considerable use in Australian schools and was the foundation for a much more ambitious nation-wide science curriculum.

During the war years, Cunningham’s ACER prevailed over the AEC. With its massive wartime psychological measurement programs of service people, the ACER was in the vanguard of increased Commonwealth leverage on state educational programs. With the AEC laying dormant for most of the war years, during this time the rise to prominence of the ACER, followed by the huge postwar reconstruction programs and the establishment and rapid expansion of a federal department of education forced the AEC into a more active role (J.P. Hughes, 2002).

J.P. Hughes (2002, 6) noted: ‘Expansion of the Commonwealth’s role began under the Commonwealth Government’s defence powers and

responsibilities was boosted by the programs for the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen and developed into schemes of assistance on a wide front, including universities and schools'. Consequently, 'as a result of the war, the Commonwealth greatly expanded its role in education, particularly in universities and technical education, through the Universities Commission, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme and the Commonwealth Scholarship program'.

Indeed, as Whitlam (1977, n.p.) argued: 'We should never forget that the principle of Federal responsibility for education—widely attributed to Menzies—is in fact a legacy of the Curtin Government ... The first Universities Commission was set up by regulation in February 1943'. Indeed, for Whitlam (1977, n.p.), 'the Commission was empowered to supervise enrolments and assist certain students as part of the Government's plans for the regulation of manpower in wartime'.

During the war, with massive increases in Commonwealth activities in the broader war effort, J.P. Hughes (2002, 6) recorded: 'There were frequent complaints by AEC members the Commonwealth had launched programs without consulting State ministers'. For many members of the AEC, the AEC was perceived as a bastion of state rights. Some feared that because the AEC had not met for three years some other authority could soon supersede it. Indeed, J.P. Hughes (2002, 7) argued when the AEC eventually met in Melbourne in May 1943: 'Its deliberations were overshadowed by the fears of the States that the Commonwealth was intent on usurping their control of education'.

Already, some members of state authorities were anxious about the Commonwealth, through its newly acquired sole control of income tax, could now exert much more economic leverage on the states. J.P. Hughes (2002, 7) explained: 'It was likely that any increased Commonwealth aid would come with strings attached, thereby undermining State control of education'. Some members of the AEC spoke of the Commonwealth riding roughshod over traditional state programs. At the AEC meeting in 1945, the

Commonwealth's John Dedman, Minister for War Organisation of Industry and for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR], in J.P. Hughes' (2002, 7) words, 'defended the Commonwealth's involvement by arguing that it was principally concerned with the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen by affording them training for callings which would be in undersupply after the war'. Teaching was one such occupation. Here J.P. Hughes (2002, 8) showed it was estimated, 'an estimated shortage of approximately 10,000 teachers in the postwar period would constitute "a grave national problem which would be exacerbated if the school leaving age was raised and class sizes reduced" '. This was a national problem which could be addressed effectively only if the Commonwealth and states shared responsibility.

During the decades before COAG, perhaps it is not surprising the AEC was biased strongly towards the hegemony of the states and territories in education. Its numbers were made up mainly state ministers of education and their heads of departments. Instead of a Commonwealth Office of Education, the AEC pushed for an interstate bureau to be housed in a permanent AEC secretariat, rather than in a Commonwealth government department (Spaull, 1987).

The beginning of international school education in Australia: sponsored and overseas private students

While motivated principally to offset the perceived influences of communism in Asia, with the main offender perceived to be the newly established People's Republic of China, the Colombo Plan along with other sponsored overseas student programs—the United Nations and Home programs—had some considerable impact on Australian school education, and consequently more broadly. In various forms under the auspices of the Commonwealth, secondary school students in their thousands from Malaya—renamed Malaysia in 1963—Singapore and Hong Kong were enrolled in Australian secondary schools during the 1950s and 1960s. Suddenly, many Australian secondary school students were rubbing shoulders with Asian students, and severely denting old White Australia

inspired racial prejudices. For example, *The Burr*, Bathurst High School's student annual magazine showed in 1961 an Asian—Malayan—Student Society was formed in the school with twenty-seven members, comprising three girls, all from Malaya, and all in either Years 10 or 11—then named Fourth and Fifth Years, the senior years of secondary schooling. *The Burr* (1961, 53) reported: 'Soon after its formation, the Society held its first function in meeting the members of the [school's] P. and C. Association. The members performed a Malayan cultural dance, sang some songs and gave a few speeches'. At the time there were four classes in the senior grades. Consequently, the Malayan students added twenty-seven students to the existing hundred or so students in the senior grades at Bathurst High School.

There were similar enrolments of Asian students at Bathurst High School for much of the 1960s, all sponsored through the Christian Home Student Assistance Scheme and through the Presbyterian Church and Rotary Club, with a key player for the early years being Bathurst High School's Headmaster, C.O.G. Thomas. Sixty years later, the Bathurst High School Asian students of the 1960s continued praising Thomas (Kir, 2016). During Thomas' tenure over 120 Asian students passed through the school, with most matriculating. In one year there was forty seven Asian students enrolled (*The Burr*, 1963, 5). A physiotherapist from Ashfield, Sydney, Eric Kir, was one of the Asian students who attended Bathurst High School in 1961 and 1962, and immensely gained from the experience, proceeded onto university. Of course, Kir's experience was repeated tens of thousands of time over, signalling how either through Commonwealth initiatives or through Commonwealth support, Asian students were enriching Australia, socially, economically and culturally, at the same time assisting in breaking down the severe racial prejudices of White Australia.

Later to become a teacher, a Bathurst High School student looked upon the Asian students in a positive manner. 'Looking back on it now, they brought a massive change to the culture of our school,' remembers Dennis Croucher, retired principal of Orange Public School and a school prefect in his Fifth

Year class at Bathurst High School in 1961. ‘Two of them played footie [rugby league] with our senior school team. They constituted almost the whole of the soccer team. They were great people, and at the time for many Australian students, a real lesson in dedication to learning, strength of character, and a determination to succeed, considering the many invisible challenges they faced in a semi-rural society such as Bathurst was in the early-1960s’. For Croucher (2015), many Australians thought these students had a Japanese appearance, and the early-1960s was not far removed from the bitter memories of World War II (Croucher, 2015).

The host schools encouraged the Asian students’ engagement in sport. As Oakman (2004, 153) commented, Australian Minister for External Affairs, Richard C. Casey, in stark competition to the USSR, which was striving for similar sporting programs, encouraged sport between the Colombo Plan nations, even to the extent including champion athlete John Landy and tennis champion, Frank Sedgeman to participate in programs visiting Colombo Plan countries.

To return to the private overseas students, such as Eric Kir mentioned above, who were enrolled in Australian schools, colleges and universities, many of them in private schools in traditional boarding school regional centres such as Bathurst, Orange and Armidale. These students posed a different kind of policy issue for federal governments. So powerful was the *zeitgeist* of the foreign policy issues of confronting communism, the Menzies Government was blindsided by its force. But of course, federalism needed to travel quite a distance further before Commonwealth school education policy could embrace the idea of school education being a major export industry.

With the number of Asian students adding to the existing hundred or so senior students at Bathurst High School in 1961, there was a considerable impost on its physical facilities and staffing. Schools had little recurrent or capital funding discretions of their own. The state Department of Education funded staff and facilities. In return for its service with the Asian students,

the principal of Bathurst High School reported in 1964 of a new assembly hall, sporting facilities and paved student areas (*The Burr*, 1964, 5).

The Colombo Plan

Initially formed by seven Commonwealth nations to boost Asian economic and social development through economic and technical assistance, the Colombo Plan was developed in the face of the communist threat in Asia and South East Asia. In the spring of 1949, the Indian Ambassador to China, Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, proposed a multilateral fund to the British and Australian ambassadors, in order to help the states in their battle against communism. The US was to be by far the largest contributor of aid to the organization (Oakman, 2004).

Formally, the organization was born out of a Commonwealth Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Colombo, Sri Lanka—then Ceylon—in January 1950. At this meeting a plan was established to provide a framework within which international cooperation efforts could be promoted to raise the standards of people in the region. Originally conceived as lasting for a period of six years, the Colombo Plan was extended several times until 1980, when it was extended indefinitely (Oakman, 2004; Lowe, 2010).

The Colombo Plan particularly influenced the author's appreciation of multicultural Australia. The UTAS website notes: 'One of eight Australian institutions participating in the scheme, the University of Tasmania welcomed overseas students from 1951, and their input helped reshape Tasmanian culture through exposure to different perspectives' (Colombo Plan, n.d.). Again, as with the Asian students at Bathurst High School, 'Colombo Plan scholars lived with local families, spoke at service club meetings, worked in vacation jobs, joined the Overseas Students Association and participated in sports such as soccer, table tennis and badminton. Numerically predominant, the Malaysian students formed their own society in 1963' (Colombo Plan, n.d.).

In triumphalist and whiggish, indeed, even hagiographic terms, Howard (2014) recorded the establishment, the internal machinations and the criticism of the Colombo Plan, but concluded it has, ‘rightly been seen as a milestone in relations between Australia and Asia’ (Howard, 2014, 220). Equally whiggish in his approach to the topic is Oakman’s (2004) work, which records the accomplishments of Menzies’ Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs (1949-1951), and Richard C. Casey’s, Spender’s successor (1951-1960).

As an undergraduate, I attended UTAS during the late-1960s and early-1970s and saw how the Colombo Plan students enriched the University’s culture. I was a school teacher, and many of his friends were following a similar career. We went from university to schools around Tasmania, carrying with us strong multi-cultural attitudes to Asian cultures. It is a fair assumption this was a story repeated many times throughout Australia.

The vexed issue of Commonwealth policy for international private students

For the 1950s through to the 1980s private international students enrolled in Australia’s private schools also increasingly were rubbing shoulders with Asian students. With a changing *zeitgeist* in the 1980s, influenced by economic rationalism and globalism, state and territory government began to realise the emerging financial benefits. During the 1950s and 1960s, moreover, the numbers of international students were growing. Megarrity (2005, 34) showed: ‘The number of private overseas students in any educational institution—primary, secondary and tertiary—rose from just over 1,500 in 1951 to 10,000 in 1967’ (NAA, 1965; Dept of Education and Science, 1969, cited in Megarrity, 2005, 34). Megarrity (2005) showed the biggest increase in private overseas student numbers occurred in the secondary school and university level, and the vast majority were students of Chinese ethnic origin, particularly those from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (s, 1965, cited in Megarrity, 2005, 34).

Illustrating the geopolitics of the times, with a partnering headline concerning the ‘Vietnam Task Force’, and addressing the politics of anxiety of the time of South East Asia, in its Editorial, the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 27 May 1966 also addressed the issue of ‘Student Exchange’—that is, international students enrolled in Australian educational institutions (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1966). This was an area of Commonwealth responsibility of Senator John Gorton. As an index to the growing importance of education to the Commonwealth, Menzies appointed Gorton to the position of Minister for Education in December 1966, the first such appointment. Previously, Commonwealth responsibilities for education was with the Minister-in-charge of Commonwealth Activities in Education and Research under the Prime Minister, a position held by Gorton from December 1963 until December 1966 (NMA, n.d.).

The *SMH* editorial illustrates the extent in the popular mind which international students were perceived as a part of Australia’s aid program. The editorial declared ‘Senator Gorton has done well to bring into the open a problem that has been causing concern for some time—the strain the numbers of overseas students place on certain of our educational institutions’ (*SMH*, 27 May 1966). In 1966 according to the *SMH* editorial (1966) there were 12,500 international students—‘overwhelmingly from South-East Asia’—enrolled in Australian educational institutions, bringing with them ‘undoubtedly some burdens’. According to the editorial, ‘only 1,600 of these overseas students are under the Colombo Plan or other tiny schemes’. Yet, ‘the presence of these students is indeed an essential, perhaps the most important of our assistance program’ (*SMH*, 27 May 1966).

For the *SMH* editorial (1966), ‘the benefits have not been one-way. We have the intangible gains of the diversity of interests and outlook these students have brought us’. Yet, according to the *SMH* (1966) editorial, the international students were putting pressure on the resources of Australia’s educational institutions. Of the 12,500 students, 4,000 were enrolled in schools and colleges. And the *SMH* editorial (1966) pushed to have the burden spread more evenly across the Australian states and territories,

outside New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. The year the *SMH* editorial was written, the author of this paper enrolled at Launceston Teachers' College, and one of the first students he met there was Peter Ho, an international private study student from Singapore (Fist, 1993).

But where were federal policies for private international students? Researching the Minutes of a Meeting of Department of External Affairs (28 September 1960) from the National Archives of Australia (NAA), Megarrity (2005, 35) showed: 'In direct contrast to the control and interest shown in Colombo Plan and other sponsored students during the 1950s and 1960s, the Australian Government did not have a strong policy commitment to the private overseas student program'. Moreover, 'for administrative and financial reasons, External Affairs and the Commonwealth Office of Education were extremely reluctant to commit themselves to a clearly defined set of responsibilities towards private overseas students' (35). For External Affairs, only '“incidental benefits” could be made available to private overseas students' and 'the Commonwealth Office of Education also had “a very heavy Colombo Plan commitment” and could not give “excessive attention to private students”' (Megarrity, 2005, 34). In short, Colombo Plan students dominated government policy during the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, as Megarrity (2005, 34) showed, the number of Colombo Plan students to Australia was falling during the 1960s. Conversely, growing in numbers were private international students.

Private schools and colleges also were reaping benefitting. As with Australian students, international parents simply obtained an appropriate visa, paid the private school the appropriate fee and enrolled their children. One such private international student was Lingam Manickam born in Taiping, Malaysia—(then Malaya)—who attended All Saints College, Bathurst during the years 1952-54. From here he matriculated, attended the University of Sydney, married a girl from Cowra, New South Wales, and later became a medical practitioner in Dural, New South Wales. Lingam remembered six other Malayan students attending Bathurst All Saints College at the time (Manickam, 2015). Of course, these enrolments were

being repeated many times over throughout Australia in private boarding schools with international reputations. Moreover, throughout Australia the numbers of private international students would only grow with a growing Asian middle-class, and more relaxed Australian student visa requirements for prospective students outside of British Commonwealth countries.

Meanwhile, private international students, the Colombo Plan students, and students from similar schemes were having a subtle but powerful effect on Australian school education, as well as some influence on Australian society and culture. While as a curriculum component, multi-cultural education in Australian schools was almost non-existent until the Whitlam years, when it was finally enacted as policy through the Australian Schools Commission Report, there were many teachers in Australian schools ready to embrace the ideals. Moreover, arguably when the Colombo Plan and other students returned to their homelands with stories of Australian universities, many parents—most likely middle-class—chose to have their children attend Australian boarding schools as fee-paying students in order they might then enrol in an Australian university. Thus, indirectly, the international students brought many multi-cultural attitudes and knowledge to Australian schools.

The slow realisation of government policy for private fee-paying international students provides a classical example of veracity of Kingdon's *Agendas* in historical policy analysis. The necessary *zeitgeist* and political thrust had not yet emerged in the policy mix. Not until the onset of globalism and economic rationalism during the 1980s would policy-makers consider the value of fee-paying international students to state and private educational authorities, and incorporate this into policy.

The Murray Committee and the establishment of the Universities Commission (1957)

In 1957 there were only eight Australian universities: University of Queensland, the University of New England, the University of Sydney, the New South Wales University of Technology—from 1958, the University of New South Wales—the University of Melbourne, the University of

Tasmania, the University of Adelaide, the University of Western Australia, and the Australian National University (ANU). Victoria's Monash University was founded in 1958, and the University of Newcastle in 1965. With the exception of the ANU, all universities were state-regulated. Through various courses, usually a graduate diploma of education or an undergraduate certificate course, these institutions supplied the bulk of the teachers for the states' secondary schools. For the first decade of the Menzies Government, these institutions operated on an elitist nineteenth-century model, being virtually a law unto themselves.

At my school there were classes for Kindergarten through to Year 9—Third Year. At the height of pressures from the postwar baby boomers, physical facilities and teacher supply were hard pressed to cope. At the end of Year 8—Second Year or Second Form—the school's headmaster came to the Year 8 students and encouraged us to take a job. The local timber mill and farmers were in short-supply with labour, and the school's facilities were being challenged with over-crowding. Working-class children who would turn fifteen years the following year were strongly encouraged to join the work force. Children of better-off parents would have the option of completing their Year 9 Intermediate Certificate and then move to a high school or private school to complete their Leaving Certificate in a nearby regional city. Some children of much-better-off parents had left the central school, usually in Year Four, to attend a boarding school in Sydney or a neighbouring regional city. I joined the workforce in 1959 as a fourteen year old. Working-class boys and girls had few options for education in 1959 in country towns in New South Wales. That was two years after John Howard enrolled in Law at the University of Sydney (Howard, 2014, 248).

Howard (2014) argued the system worked well. That, indeed, may have been so for John Winston Howard, the son of a Sydney middle-class small businessman, but it certainly was not what I experienced in 1959, the son of a working-class timber mill hand in small town in country New South Wales. As a fourteen year-old I was off to a career as a timber industries worker. Fortunately, at twenty-years of age, in dramatic circumstances the

local doctor convinced me to do my Leaving Certificate by correspondence (Rodwell, 2000, x).

In 1965, I completed the Leaving Certificate through the New South Wales Correspondence School, and went off to the Launceston Teachers' College the following year. My experiences were very different than those Howard (2014) paints for himself. For me, having an education qualifying me to enrol in Law at the University of Sydney was about as remote from my expectations as flying to the moon. When I left school at fourteen years of age, I'm not too sure if I even knew what was involved in enrolling in university. Certainly, it was never spoken about at my school, where for boys career options for working-class kids was either the timber mill or a farm-hand for boys, and marriage, or a counter job at a local store for girls. From my experience, this was repeated in all country towns across rural Australia.

Howard (2014, 249) claimed the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme developed by the Menzies Government in 1950 was 'less expensive and equally fair' compared with the Whitlam Labor Government in 1973. It was less expensive, but certainly not equally fair. I argue that may only be the case for students other than working-class students. Middle-class students such as Howard who in the first instance had access to quality secondary education, which thousands of working-class kids such as myself were denied in the immediate postwar decades. The Menzies Government did nothing to alleviate that.

The inquiry by the Murray Committee on Australian Universities in 1957 heralded the beginning of government influence on higher education. Since the establishment of universities in the mid-nineteenth century there had been virtually no control or influence applied by governments. The 1957 review, the first national and wide-ranging investigation of Australian university education, revealed acute inadequacies in the standard of university education, such as overcrowding, poor facilities, a high dropout rate, and poor research levels. Chaired by Keith Murray, the Head of the

British Universities Grant's Commission, the Committee reported on a variety of needs facing Australian universities (CoA, 1957; Howard, 2014, 248-9; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998; Marginson & Considine, 2000).

It is significant, Menzies chose a British university administrator to report on Australian universities: A sign that under Menzies Australia had not broken entirely from its colonialist past. Howard (2014) does not comment on this fact. Yet, the report was instrumental in advancing Australian universities, and impacting on Australian school education.

The report recommended increased expenditure so universities were not only for the privileged few, and the formation of a Universities Grants Committee. The Commonwealth responded initially by increasing grants and forming an Australian Universities Commission. This egalitarian goal, however, was delayed by the recommendation by the 1964 Martin report arguing for a binary system, the outcome of which was the creation of a separate sector of vocational and applied colleges in parallel with universities (CoA, 1957; Howard, 2014, 248-9; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1998; Marginson & Considine, 2000).

By the time I graduated from Launceston Teachers' College in May 1968, I had visited the plush new Sandy Bay Campus of the University of Tasmania, talked with some professors, including Professor Michael Roe from the History Department and Professor James McAuley from the English Department. If I managed to gain a Hobart appointment as a teacher, I could attend lectures, and the Department of Education would reimburse my fees, which at the time cost about \$150 per subject for a year. If I were appointed outside of Hobart there was 'the extramural option' for me. This comprised a \$10 fee and the right only to sit for the yearly examinations. However, under 'the extramural option' I could not access lecturers, attend tutorials or lectures, or receive any kind of instructional material. I could, however, make use of the University's Library facilities, if I cared to make the three and a half hour drive to Hobart. The year's work in a single subject was assessed through two or three, three-hour examinations

in late November. This is in contrast with liberal facilities available for teachers for many years at the University of New England located in Armidale, New South Wales.

At the University of Tasmania, there were three subjects available under the extramural option. It was a matter of getting past students' lecture notes, looking to past examinations, buying some text books, and some hard after-school work. My appointment at Beaconsfield Area School in northern Tasmania in May 1968 required me to take 'the extramural option'. Here I briefly describe my experiences to underscore the fact that even by 1968 the good work of the Universities Commission had not filtered through to improving the university study opportunities for candidates outside of many of Australia's capital cities. Still a Tasmanian Department of Education officer assured me if I passed my three extramural subjects with at least a Distinction level there would be a Hobart appointment available to me in order that I may attend lectures as a part-time student.

While the above developments in Australian universities had little immediate effect on the relationship of the Commonwealth with Australian school education, they did show two important aspects relevant to this research. First, there was now a clear precedent of Commonwealth involvement in Australian education; second, to a very large extent there was an opening up of universities to increasing numbers of Australian school leavers, providing a career path for the increasing demand for teachers.

The Martin Report and the establishment of the Australian colleges of advanced education (CAEs) (1968)

With tertiary educational institutions under enormous funding and enrolment pressures during the 1960s, CAEs were designed to complement universities, forming a binary system modelled on that of the United Kingdom. The Menzies government created the system on the advice of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, chaired by Sir Leslie H. Martin, who was Chairman of the Australian Universities

Commission from 1959 to 1966 (Home, 2012). Many of Australia's CAEs grew from state-administered teachers' colleges.

In 1967 when I was a student at Launceston Teachers' College, I remember a group of high-level Commonwealth Government politicians attending the campus. The Launceston Teachers' College was housed in the old Charles Street Practising School, a building still standing today. What I was only vaguely aware of in 1967 was these visitors were looking at tertiary education institutions around the country, with a view of implementing the recommendations of the 1961 Martin Report which would herald profound changes for Australian school education. By 1967, Menzies had retired, Harold Holt unfortunately had drowned at Cheviot Beach, Portsea, and now John Gorton was Prime Minister. It hardly could be argued the Coalition Government was rushing into implementing the Martin Report. Certainly, in his study of the *Menzies Era*, Howard (2014) does not explain why the decade or so elapsed before the recommendations of the report were implemented.

Launceston Teachers' College may have been one of the first such Australian institutions to receive Commonwealth assistance. Fist (1993, 127) cited February 1967 communication between Malcolm Fraser, Federal Minister for Education and Sciences, and Bill Neilson, the Tasmanian Minister for Education. In 1968 the Tasmanian Council of Advanced Education was established under the authority of the *Advanced Education Act (1968)*. Consequently, by 1970 Launceston Teachers' College and Hobart Teachers' College were incorporated into the Tasmanian CAE (TCAE): In Launceston at a new campus and buildings in Newnham; in Hobart at a new campus and buildings at Mount Nelson, The foundation schools were Business and Administration, Engineering and Physical Sciences, and Education and General Studies (Fist, 1993, 250). This was a story repeated in much the same manner across Australia, at either the same time or soon after (Anderson, et al, 1975).

State aid: the 1962 Goulburn imbroglio and Menzies' capital school grants for school science blocks and libraries

The 1962 Goulburn Catholic schools imbroglio was a pivotal moment in education policy and Australia's school education. A number of studies have looked to the general issues associated with State Aid. These include, Hogan (1979) and Commonwealth Education Department (2006). The fiftieth anniversary of a central event in the history of State Aid prompted some insightful studies, linking the 1962 Goulburn entanglement to other critical events in the history of Commonwealth funding for Australian schools.

Emma Macdonald (2012) from the *Canberra Times* took up the story commemorating its fifty-year anniversary. Indeed, Canberra was close to the epicentre of where the whole thing began. Her article provides a fascinating account of the issues, the people and the 2000 Catholic school children descending on six government schools across the town, where only 640 spots were available. The immediate incident involved was when in the Goulburn Diocese schools were closed because of issues in upgrading the toilet blocks at St Brigid's Catholic School. Macdonald (2012) stated how the following scenes 'captured headlines across the nation—forced the then prime minister Robert Menzies to commit to funding Catholic schools through "state aid" against opposition from the Labor Party, which had the flow-on political effect of undermining the ALP's traditional Catholic voter base' (n.p.). Consequently, according to Macdonald (2012, n.p.), 'by the time Gough Whitlam came to power, Labor had embraced state aid. Commonwealth and state contributions to non-government schools have been happening ever since'.

In researching her article, Macdonald (2012) looked to the incumbent director of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Moira Najdecki. Insightfully, according to Macdonald (2012, n.p.), Najdecki said the 1962 strike had a 'profound impact on politics and education in Australia which was still evident today as the Gonski Review recommends sweeping changes to fund all Australian students based on

need, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a religious or government school’.

Macdonald (2012, n.p.) reported Najdecki as explaining: ‘We are still arguing about these sorts of funding issues, although it’s not quite as sectarian as it was ... the Goulburn strike showed that if we didn’t have non-government schools, paid for largely by families, the cost to the Australian taxpayer would be phenomenal’.

Indeed, just as Chapter Ten of this study will show, as the Coalition’s opposition to the Gonski funding proposals accepted by the states and territories under the Gillard Government, back in 1962 it was the opposition from the Labor Party to State Aid which Howard (2014, 314-318, 320-321, 325-326) accounts for and illustrates the lemming-like attitude of the 1962 Labor Party riven by the 1955 Split. Yet despite Howard’s (2014) claim, in parliament in 1962 the Labor Opposition was active in pushing for Commonwealth involvement in school education—at least in government schools.

For example, in Federal Parliament at the beginning of 1962, the Labor Opposition moved to the front foot on matters concerning the Commonwealth involvement in school education. In reply to the Governor-General’s Address, the leader of the Opposition, Arthur Calwell, claimed: ‘We of the Opposition are concerned to realize that insufficient money is being made available to conduct State education departments’ (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 350). Indeed, ‘the New South Wales Government is spending £79,000,000 [\$158,000,000] a year on education’ (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 350). However, according to the rambunctious Leader of the Opposition, ‘this is still insufficient to ensure adequate classrooms, sufficient teachers, sufficient schools and all that goes to make up an education system; yet the [Menzies] Government is content to sit idly by and do nothing about it’ (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 350).

Frank Courtney, long-time Plumbers' Union powerbroker, and Labor Member for Darebin (Vic.) also spoke to the Governor-General's Address. He claimed 'it is well known that last year a representative conference was called in New South Wales of parents, delegates and educational authorities. It directed attention forcibly to the position of primary, secondary and technical education in Australia' (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 367). Courtney went on to claim: 'Frequent representations have been made to the Prime Minister (Mr Menzies) asking that a committee like the Murray committee be appointed to inquire into education in Australia. Each time, the Prime Minister has somewhat contemptuously rejected the representations'. Tragically, according to Courtney, Menzies had 'informed the Premier of New South Wales that the Commonwealth Government had no intention of calling such a committee together to discuss education' (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 367). Courtney predicted: 'Hundreds of thousands of persons who want something done about education ... if they want their wishes granted, they will need to change the government' (CofA, 1962, No. 9, 367). However, another ten years would pass before the Australian voting public would install Whitlam as the prime minister to bring the prediction into being.

Despite Menzies' denial, the angst in Australian society was widespread and would soon find expression in the form of demonstrations, albeit a change in government was a decade away. We should be clear, however, Calwell and the majority of his party were calling for Commonwealth assistance to state schools, not Catholic schools. Whitlam held a vision which included the latter.

Henderson (2012, n.p.) provides an analytical study of the 1962 incident in Goulburn's Catholic schools. He begins by stating 'it seems so unlikely that a crumbling, decommissioned block of toilets could have changed the course of Australian political history, and we might add, Australian educational history. Henderson (2012) showed how the incident led directly to Menzies at the 1963 election promising science blocks for all Australian schools, a huge step in federal-state-territory educational policy, bringing with it massive changes to Australian school education. Endorsing the

underpinning political imperatives of this legislation, Henderson (2012, n.p.) wrote how this did not happen by chance. Indeed, ‘the Menzies government had achieved only a narrow victory in the 1961 election. It was saved by a strong first preference flow from the Democratic Labor Party, which had been formed as a consequence of the Labor Split of the mid-1950s’. According to Henderson (2012, n.p.), ‘B.A. Santamaria (the president of the Catholic lay organisation the National Civic Council) and others convinced the Coalition of the need to make a gesture to the largely Catholic DLP voters’. Consequently, ‘by the end of the 1960s, the principle of government assistance to non-government schools and students had been firmly established. Soon after, Labor, which had long opposed assisting non-government schools, came on board’ (Henderson, 2012, n.p.).

It is worth noting, this is in accord with Kingdon’s (1984/2003) model of agenda-setting, policy development and enactment. The policy stream existed, it was however, the combining this with the political stream—or the political necessity—producing the policy outcome of State Aid. It certainly was not the manifestations of a magnanimous government. It illustrates the relevance of social conflict theory to Australian educational history.

Science laboratories and school libraries

Harrington (2013) agreed with Henderson (2012), adding the *States Grants (Science Laboratories and Technical Training) Act (1964)* marking capital funding for schools was a pivotal moment in the history of federal-state-territory relations in school education. Now the Commonwealth assisted in the provision of science laboratories and equipment in government and non-government secondary schools. The *States Grants (Secondary School Libraries) Act (1969)* extended Australian Government capital assistance to finance library facilities in both government and non-government secondary schools.

Howard’s 2014 narrative does not acknowledge the *ad hoc*, opportunistic and politicized nature of the Commonwealth’s involvement in Australian school education during the Menzies years and the subsequent Gorton and

McMahon Government—initiatives driven by political pragmatism (Lingard, 1998). To this end, and further endorsing our arguments for the connection here with Kingdon's (1984/2003) model and social conflict theory, Lingard (1998, 1) states: 'until the implementation of the recommendations of the Karmel Report ... during 1973 and 1974 the Commonwealth's involvement in schooling had been very much a specific purpose kind of somewhat *ad hoc* in character, driven by considerations of political pragmatism'. Indeed, for Lingard (1998, 1), 'the best exemplars of this probably are the Commonwealth Science Laboratories (1964) and Commonwealth Libraries (1968) introduced by Coalition governments'. 'The same could be said, however, of the tentative moves, prior to the election of the Whitlam government in December 1972, towards the introduction of the recurrent and capital for non-government schools, and the first step toward capital grants for government schools (1969)' (Lingard, 1998, 1).

Let us, however, proceed with a description of how Commonwealth programs impacted positively on school education.

1969: the beginning of recurrent funding for school students

The 1969 federal election was a turning point for the long-standing Coalition Government, now led by John Gorton. The Coalition suffered a seven per cent swing against it at the 1969 election, and Labor outpolled it on the two-party-preferred vote. Gorton saw the sizeable forty-five-seat majority he had inherited from Holt cut down to only seven. Indeed, the Coalition might have lost government had it not been again for the DLP's longstanding practice of preferencing against Labor. The Coalition was only assured of an eighth term in government when DLP preferences tipped four marginal seats in Melbourne—the DLP's heartland—to the Liberals. Had those preferences gone the other way, Whitlam would have become Prime Minister (Reid, 1971). School education was an attractive means to regain some political capital, and the Gorton Government responded with the *States Grants (Capital Assistance) Act (1971-72.)*

Under continued political challenge, the Gorton Coalition Government had sought previously to regain some of the Catholic vote when its general recurrent per student grants for non-government schools were introduced in 1970, a major impetus for which was the struggling Catholic school sector. Earlier, the *States Grants (Independent Schools) Act (1969)* authorised payments to non-government schools at the flat rates of \$35 per primary school student and \$50 per secondary school student. From 1973, these grants were fixed at a rate equivalent to twenty per cent of the cost of educating a child in a government school (Caldwell, Selleck, & Wilkinson, 2007).

Again, there is a strong connect with Kingdon's (1984/2003) model of policy development and implementation. The *States Grants (Independent Schools) Act (1969)* and the *States Grants (Capital Assistance) Act (1971-72)* occurred under political pressure from a fading Coalition Commonwealth Government.

Australian Science Education Project (ASEP)

The cold war backgrounded and dominated Australian education from the time the Menzies Coalition Government assumed power through until the Coalition under Sir William McMahon lost power to Whitlam's Labor Government on 2 December 1972. A nation's defence required substantial science education for Australian school students. During this period the Commonwealth responded to national imperatives through the Australian Science Education Project (ASEP).

At a national level, ASEP was a response to the dire state of Australia's science curricula, backgrounded by the cold war, and initiatives already underway with federal-funded science laboratories. State education departments, professional associations and other educational organisations established projects for curriculum initiatives pressuring the Commonwealth government to fund ASEP in 1968. ASEP initiated national cooperation between various educational authorities in Australia for the purpose of curriculum development.

Piper (1997) highlights two features of the project: (1) national curriculum development viewed as a partnership between the Commonwealth and the states and included the principle of shared funding; and (2) a recognition of the importance of involving teachers in the process of curriculum development.

Long-term science educator and researcher, and Dean of Education at Monash University, Peter Fensham (2015), concurred with Piper's (1997) point, but insisted Piper is off the mark with the second point. For Fensham (2015), ASEP grew out of the Victorian initiative, JSSP, which was ACER-based and essentially a central hub-type curriculum development (also see Cohen & Fraser, 1987).

Specialised teacher training courses in physical education at Australian universities

In her study analysing the meanings and practices contributing to the physical education curriculum in New South Wales from 1880 to 1980, J. Wright (2006, n.p.) used 'a feminist perspective to argue that the dominance of a masculine agenda, built around organized sport and the human movement sciences'. In direct contrast to the research advanced by Macdonald (2013), attended to below in this section, J. Wright (2006, n.p.) argued these practices have 'marginalized other pedagogies and other forms of physical activity, such as gymnastics and dance, which are more likely to be associated with women'. In the main, this present research concurs with her findings, but seeks to remind her during the 1950s and 1960s at least state governments were selective in providing physical education for students. She ought to have considered the long-standing influences of the compulsory military-inspired Commonwealth cadet legislation of the period 1911-1929. Perhaps, also she could have considered the manner demonstrated by this research in which these martial ideals impacted on the curriculum in Australian schools and colleges, the manifestations of which were still evident through to the 1960s. What were other Commonwealth leverages on physical education in Australian school education?

In her Chapter Three, Charlotte Macdonald (2013) confirmed the continuing influence of the ministerial councils on school education, and in particular physical education in New South Wales. Also, she confirmed the influence of the Commonwealth on physical education through community-based organisations such as Sydney's Health Week, all of which advanced girls' and women's participation in physical education in the community-at-large and in the schools and colleges.

Underpinning the importance of Kingdon's notions of the need to consider the influence of policy entrepreneurs, C. Macdonald (2013) analysed the long-standing influence of Gordon Young and the National Fitness Council in New South Wales. This is a point confirmed by Cashman (2002, n.p.) who showed Young was 'a man of abundant energy and enthusiasm, Young responded with a flurry of community consultation to promote a more professional concept of physical education, emphasizing fitness and health'. His energy and ambitions brought him to 'set up in-service courses for teachers during vacations, reformed the curriculum, organized better facilities and resources, and initiated a "flying squad" of eight men and seven women to visit schools' (C. Macdonald, 2013, n.p.). Yet, he remained frustrated in many ways, 'because he was never given full control of his field, he failed to have physical education courses introduced at the University of Sydney in 1943; instructors were trained instead at Teachers' College, Sydney' (C. Macdonald, 2013, n.p.).

For the memory of the author of this research, the 'flying squad' never reached his school in country New South Wales while he was a student there in the 1950s.

This increased activity in physical education, however, was made possible through the Commonwealth subsidising the states and supporting them in a fitness campaign with various grants. While agreeing with what this research has stated concerning the prolonged influence of the school cadets movement on physical education in Australian schools and colleges, Fischer

(2001, 123) showed as part of the envisaged *National Fitness Act (1941)* the Menzies Government had informed the six states on 12 July 1939 that it was to make £100,000 [\$200,00]—at rate of £20,000 [\$40,000] a year—available for a nation-wide fitness campaign.

At the 1940 conference of State Ministers of Health chaired by the national Health Minister, the Commonwealth accepted the recommendations of the conference, which were as follows:

- a) £1,000 [\$2,000] p.a. to each state National Fitness Council for organisation and administration expenses
- b) £2,000 [\$4,000] p.a. each to the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne. £1,500 [\$3,000] p.a. each to the Universities of Queensland, Adelaide and Western Australia, £1,000 [\$2,000] p.a. to the University of Tasmania—for establishment of lectureships in Physical Education
- c) balance of amount (£4,500 [\$9,000] p.a.) to be allocated by the Commonwealth Minister for Health—on 21 August 1940, the Minister approved of a further £500 [\$1000] p.a. to each of the State National Fitness Councils (T. Forristal, 1942, Memorandum cited in Fischer, 2001, 123).

While confirming the influences of the ministerial councils on physical education, Fischer's (2001) PhD thesis addressed the issue of overall Commonwealth influence on physical education within the context of school education. She argued the 1930s through to the early-1970s were years of 'silent control'—almost conspiratorial—by the Commonwealth over physical education in schools. This is an interesting, if not curious, thesis. Certainly, at least one student undertaking the six-months certificate course in physical education in 1956 remembers clearly understanding the Commonwealth's involvement in physical education while undertaking the course. Moreover, he assumed most other students knew this to be the case (B. Davies, 2015).

In perhaps a gross overstatement, Fischer (2001) argued few Australians realised this influence. Her point concerning the 'silent control' by the Commonwealth, this present research argues this results from her not considering in her research the paradigms of federalism: The

Commonwealth is conceptualised as a background organisation, underpinned by military ideals during this period, with unchanging relationships with the states. Her point concerning physical education being the sole curriculum area of Commonwealth influence also is contestable, and is perhaps only true if the school curriculum is defined in a narrow context. After all, during these decades Fischer (2001) has under study, the ACER asserted a very powerful influence on school education curriculum.

Analysis and conclusions

By the end of this long twenty-three-year epoch of Coalition governments, school education was looming as a major ingredient in federal-state-territory relations. It was proving to be a vote-winner. Once Whitlam had broken down old prejudices within old-style Labor concerning government assistance to Catholic schools, he was able harness a potentially winning policy to take to the people at the December 1972 election, and school education would be forever changed.

Partly driven by the Soviet's 'sputnik scare' and the consequent panic, the Soviets were overtaking the West in the aerospace race, the Commonwealth's leverage on school education during this epoch was underpinned by political imperative, this providing the essential stream for Kingdon's agenda-setting model. Waiting in the wings, were Whitlam, Beazley (Snr) et al, prominent policy entrepreneurs with alternative and much more expansive Commonwealth educational policy on which to build from that commenced by a reluctant Coalition Government.

While during this epoch the Commonwealth's role in school education was more prominently political, but it was also extremely *ad hoc*, addressing the political moment more than national issues of equity and need. Despite often being *ad hoc*, there were policies enacted during the period having long-standing effects on school education, and certainly provided directions for more focussed policies with future governments. ASEP showed just what could be achieved with curriculum development through a future national Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), involving teachers in its

development and implementation, but being coordinated through state and territory bureaucracies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Coordinative Federalism and Treading Softly: the Whitlam and Fraser Years (1972-83)

Introduction

The burning fuse linking the politics of federalism with social conflict theory and Kingdon's model burnt brightly during the Whitlam years. For Baby Boomers such as myself who were at school during the Menzies decades and at university during the Whitlam years, this was an experience never repeated. On reflection now in 2015, for me the Menzies era was a period when Australia remained locked in its colonialist past. On the other hand, Whitlam would usher in a period of social democracy and post-colonialism, addressing such issues as systems of state school education severely lacking equity, feminist and family issues, and Indigenous affairs. For me, the Whitlam years was a period of great optimism and change.

In respect to school education, there were vast areas for the incoming Whitlam Government to address. With the Western Australian Kim Beazley (Snr) as Minister for Education, the beginnings were most spectacular. Even given the framework of coordinative federalism, with many states and territories such as the eastern states under the control of the Coalition, Beazley and Whitlam achieved monumental initiatives, so much so the school educational landscape of 1975 was barely recognizable from that of 1973. For very apparent political reasons, when Malcolm Fraser became prime minister in 1975 little changed, despite what many observers might argue was a definite shift to private school education funding, and with it a change in emphasis in federalism. Was this, however, enough to sustain an

argument Fraser's federalism was drastically different from that of the Whitlam years that it deserves a different nomenclature?

Certainly, in the middle of the Fraser years of government, Whitlam (1977) thought so. In his 1977 John Curtin Memorial lecture in Perth, Whitlam spoke on what he considered were the effects Fraser Government's policies on education, with particular reference to Western Australia. He railed against the Fraser Government and its so-called 'new federalism' in making the first reduction in the Federal commitment to tertiary education since the war—and needless to say, it is doing so in defiance of its promises concerning university funding.

Whitlam, however, was premature in his judgement. Indeed, it was the Hawke Labor Government which reintroduced university fees. In fact, in light of a forty-or-so-years perspective Fraser's so-called 'new federalism' amounted to little, and certainly not sufficient to warrant a separate nomenclature for its form of federalism, distinguishing it from that which preceded it.

Zeitgeist: 'he wasn't just part of a zeitgeist, he was the zeitgeist'.

Revealing the *zeitgeist* of the Menzies decades, Cai (2014, n.p.) in the *China Spectator* wrote 'when Gough Whitlam went to Communist China in 1971 as leader of the opposition, the cold war was in full swing. Australian diggers were fighting alongside American GIs in the jungles of Vietnam against the Chinese-backed Viet Cong'. Indeed, according to Cai (2014, n.p.), 'there was widespread fear of Red China in Australia. Prime Minister Robert Menzies captured the *zeitgeist* at the time, referring to "the downward thrust of Communist China between the Indian and Pacific oceans" '. Generally, the Australian media whipped up the fear that Whitlam's trip engendered, with 'Liberal Prime Minister William McMahon blasted Whitlam's China visit in July, accusing him of being a pawn of Communist China and a spokesman for the enemy being fought in Vietnam' (Cai, 1914, n.p.). Fortunately, for Whitlam's prime ministerial ambitions, 'little did McMahon know that the US secretary of state Henry Kissinger

had just led a highly secret mission to Beijing to explore the possibility of a historic visit of the US President Richard Nixon', (Cai, 2014, n.p.) In fact, 'only days after McMahon blasted Whitlam, the White House announced Nixon's visit to China, leaving the Prime Minister [McMahon] exposed and hugely embarrassed' (Cai, 2014, n.p.).

Another vital point regarding Whitlam's China trip as Opposition leader was he was 'forcing the pace' on the McMahon Government in respect to foreign relations and trade. Whitlam's urging the ALP to change its policy on recurrent funding for Catholic schools was a similar strategy, forcing the McMahon Government into doing the same things. It is a sign of the relative strength and political capital of an Opposition when it is able to force a government into a 'game change', in the manner that decades later the Abbott Opposition was able to force the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government into harsher immigration policies. This fits with Kingdon's (1984/2003) model wherein an Opposition forces a political moment enhancing an agenda-setting moment. Of course, it also fits with social conflict theory in that it places an emphasis on political moment that is at all times quite arbitrary and open to chance and vagary.

In the national outpouring of grief, praise and passion for Edward Gough Whitlam during the days following his death on 21 October 2014, Barry (2014, n.p.) wrote in *Alochonaa (Dialogue)*: 'So to young Australians, he widened the horizons of young people from poor backgrounds. He made them see the possibilities of their life and how they could make Australia a better place' (n.p.). Indeed, 'he made them and others see what it was like to be a proud Australian. That in the end is his greatest contribution to this country'. For Barry (2014, n.p.): '*He wasn't just part of a zeitgeist, he was the zeitgeist* (my emphasis). After all, no other Australian politician is referred to and recognised by their given name alone. I fear that Whitlam was a "once off" and we will not see his like again. Vale Edward Gough Whitlam'. Whitlam's ideas and the changes he was able to manage made him the *zeitgeist* of his time. Reform, social justice and equity were at every turn in Australian society.

Media comment during the days following Whitlam's death revealed the extent of the man's contribution to Australian society and culture. Academics, professionals from all branches, journalists, artists, playwrights, vast numbers of individuals commented on Whitlam's contributions (see, e.g., *The Conversation*, 2014). It was, however, *ABC News's* contribution that was for me particularly poignant, me being a huge admirer of David Williamson's *Don's Party* (1971), a play set against Whitlam's narrowly losing 1969 campaign. *ABC News* reported: 'The prime ministership of Gough Whitlam was a boon for the arts in Australia. Gough Whitlam helped change the direction of Australian culture by providing greater funding for the Australian artists and encouraging them to tell their own stories' (*The Conversation*, 2014, n.p.).

The *ABC News* transcript of the Williamson interview further noted Whitlam's contribution to the *zeitgeist* of the time and Whitlam's often-commented-upon wit:

DAVID MARK: And you tapped into that *zeitgeist* with your work, *Don's Party*. It was set against the backdrop of Whitlam's failed attempt to become prime minister in 1969, so you were really tapping into that *zeitgeist* too, that desire for change when Australia wasn't quite ready for it.

DAVID WILLIAMSON: Exactly. In fact, one of my treasured possessions is a telegram from Gough Whitlam, who saw the production in Canberra. In that play, of course, he didn't get to be prime minister and he sent me a telegram saying, I've just become prime minister so change the ending! (Laughs) (*ABC News*, 2014c, n.p.)

The Whitlam Government, however, only covered three of the eleven years under review in this chapter. While The Dismissal was a very sobering experience for many Australians, the *zeitgeist* of the earlier Whitlam period tended to be sustained in Whitlam's absence, although by 1981 it tended to be a fading memory as many Australians looked to further change. During the last years of the Fraser Government Indigenous affairs and environmental causes tended to occupy people's minds. This was the period

of the rise of the disaffected Liberal, Don Chipp's Democrats and Bob Brown's Greens, and tended to dominate the politics of the epoch. Political scientists are now turning to risk society theory to explain the rise of Green politics [Yanitsky, 2001].

The politics of the Whitlam and Fraser years

The Whitlam Government had the great misfortune to be in office during a time of international economic crises, similar in many ways in which the Rudd Government had to deal with the GFC. During the Whitlam years, rampant inflation, international oil price spiralled out of control. Paralleling this was a drastic fall in the international beef price. Indeed, the role of pastoralism in Australia's economy was diminishing, albeit from other causes. Australian rural communities suffered immensely, and assisted by a hostile News Corporation media, many blamed the Whitlam Government. At least that was my experience when I returned to my hometown in rural New South Wales, while on annual school holidays.

The day following Whitlam's death, Paul Kelly (2014, n.p.), the News Corporation Sydney-based journalist, author and TV and radio commentator, wrote in *The Australian*: 'Whitlam was an imperial social democrat, a bizarre identity. "I don't care how many *prima donnas* there are, as long as I'm the *prima donna assoluta*", he joked. But, like many of Gough's jokes, this had much truth'.

Kelly (2014, n.p.) concluded by referring to 'the issue that dare not speak its name was the Khemlani loan, proof of the amateurism of Labor's governing culture under Gough. Contrary to most claims, the \$US4 billion loan was not an aberration' (n.p.). Indeed, most political commentators would only agree with Kelly: 'It stands as Labor's political death warrant'. However, Kelly adds a poignant point concerning 'the real architect of the 1975 crisis'—Malcolm Fraser—'who incredibly seems to have been forgiven by the nation's progressive class for the greatest act of political violence in the nation's history' (n.p.).

At the time of The Dismissal, Malcolm Fraser was a very different man Australians came to know a decade or so later. Fraser (2012, n.p.) himself wrote of Whitlam in conciliatory and praising terms: ‘He was the first Australian Prime Minister to recognise China. As Australian Prime Minister he had the confidence and knowledge to recognise the distinct national interests of our country’. Indeed, for Fraser (2012, n.p.) Whitlam, ‘established ground-breaking enquiries into Land Rights for Aboriginal Australians and also over a number of environmental issues, where reports were later implemented by my government’.

Fraser omitted to mention his own Government’s response to Whitlam’s educational legislation described below. Like the environmental and Indigenous affairs legislation Fraser mentioned, to its great credit his Government that it continued supporting it, with only slight changes, despite a substantial change in the way in which the Fraser Government confronted federalism.

Griffith (1997, n.p.) wrote how Liberal Party politics stiffened during the latter years of the Whitlam Government. John Hyde, the then Liberal MHR for Moore in Western Australia had confessed: ‘A new breed of more politically ruthless individuals organised a strong power base by stacking branches in key electorates, believing the older Party hands such as himself, Chaney, Freeth, Withers and Lathby were either selling out to Canberra or not sufficiently ruthless to oppose Canberra’s “centralism”’. Indeed, it was the centralism of the Whitlam Government—the very same centripetal forces about which Menzies had so much to say—that so riled many Australian conservatives.

When The Right Hon. Sir Paul Hasluck delivered the Governor-General’s speech to the Australian Parliament in the 27th of February 1973 Australians may have stood aghast at the centripetal intent of the incoming Whitlam Labor Government. Hasluck announced breakthrough Commonwealth interventions into state and territory school education, he concluded: ‘The great objective which my Government has set for itself is to ensure genuine

equality of opportunity for all children now embarking upon their education' (CofA, 1973, No. 9, 13).

It is worth noting how Whitlam, through the Governor-General's speech, stressed the need for the collaboration of the public and private educational authorities in the states and territories. This was in tune with the dominant federalism of the epoch. Would this change under a Fraser Coalition Government following the 11th of November 1975 and an incoming Fraser Coalition government?

Writing in *Crikey*, Richardson (2010, n.p.) makes an important point concerning Fraser's political ideology, reporting: 'Fraser left the party last December, concerned about its drift to the right and saying it "was no longer a liberal party but a conservative party". The criticism is all the more damaging since it comes from someone who in his day was seen as the leader of the party's right'.

While no doubt, Fraser came under considerable political pressure from various quarters in the conservative Coalition to withstand any centralist legislation or possible repeal some of the Whitlam centralist legislation, he was closer to much of the Whitlam reform agenda than was exposed to the general public during these years.

In 1973, Fraser was a bird of another political feather. He was fervently opposed to Whitlam's Australian Schools Commission (ASC). Kelly (2014) argued he 'led the opposition to Whitlam's huge \$694 million [ASC] program, insisting that the former government's [McMahon's] formula remain in place. Whitlam threatened an election, the Coalition split, the Nationals voted with Labor, the Liberals voted against and their resistance, stubborn and bitter, was broken (n.p.). Kelly (2014) should have added the huge support the Coalition had from the private school sector. What did this mean for the future Fraser Government?

Coordinative federalism during the Whitlam and Fraser years

From 1942, uniform income taxation levied by the Commonwealth became the principal instrument of Commonwealth financial domination and VFI imbalance in the Australian federal system. The system allowed the Commonwealth to intrude into traditional fields of state responsibility by means of specific purpose grants or loans to the states for purposes such as education, health and transport.

Following twenty-three years of Coalition governments, many voting Australians had little idea of what to expect with a Labor government. In June 2014, Dorling (2014, n.p.) in the *SMH* reported ‘News Corporation chief Rupert Murdoch directed his editors to ‘kill Whitlam’ some 10 months before the downfall of Gough Whitlam’s Labor government ...’. This report followed a recent release of declassified information from US National Archives, and explained the Murdoch-controlled media’s hostility to the Whitlam Government. Entitled ‘Australian publisher privately turns on Prime Minister,’ the telegram from US Consul-General in Melbourne, Robert Brand, reported to the State Department ‘Rupert Murdoch has issued [a] confidential instruction to editors of newspapers he controls to “Kill Whitlam”’ (Dorling, 2014, n.p.). This report is corroborated by The Oxford University Press’ ‘Murdoch Papers’ which testified Murdoch’s overt interference in the 1975 campaign ‘was so bad that reporters on *The Australian* went on strike in protest and seventy-five of them wrote to their boss calling the newspaper ‘a propaganda sheet’ and saying it had become ‘a laughing stock (Wright, 1995). “You literally could not get a favourable word about Whitlam in the paper”’ (Murdoch Papers, 2014, n.p.).

Whipped up by a hostile media, particularly that of Murdoch’s News Corporation, federal-state-territories relations were at an all-time low in 1975 when the states and territories sought to resist the growing Commonwealth involvement in local and regional affairs.

Consequently, following the defeat of the Whitlam government in 1975 Prime Minister Fraser put into effect a new policy of coordinative

federalism. The outcome was an agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories in which both levels of government agreed to a system of co-operative planning and decision-making (Marginson, 1997a; Marginson, 2003).

Despite the centralisation of legislative and financial power, there are many areas where federal parliament lacked the power to interfere in education policy, even where such regulation might be seen to be in the national interests. The Hawke-Keating Government would change this. Despite some protestations from the Fraser Government and rhetoric about ‘new federalism’ during the epoch of Whitlam and Fraser there was a definite expression of centripetal forces, but yet with a clear drive towards a coordinated effort between the Commonwealth and the states and territories. Essentially, this found its expression in the Australian Schools Commission.

The Australian Schools Commission (ASC)

The most dominant development for school education during the Whitlam and Fraser years (1972-83) was the Whitlam Government’s acceptance of the *Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission* in May 1973.

For Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), ‘the Schools Commission was the most visible demonstration of the Commonwealth determination to achieve national education policies and programs but there were others—in the domains of university and vocational education and educational research’. Moreover, ‘although these developments in education were part of a wider determination to exercise authority and control at the Commonwealth level, they should not be seen in isolation from those many in other countries, which became stronger in the following decades, notably the US and the UK’. Thus began what was in Skilbeck’s (2015a) words, ‘the most creative period of Australian school education’.

Skilbeck (2015a) further explained in respect to the founding of the ASC, ‘it is not clear precisely what Australian policy makers wanted beyond joining

the international movement for schooling more closely matching broader social, cultural and economic goals, such as greater social equality, more efficient and productive economies, greater social cohesion and so on'. Certainly, as Skilbeck (2015a) noted 'there are of course ministerial statements, reports—notably that of the Karmel Committee which led to the establishment of the Schools Commission—academic books and articles each with their own versions of policy-making as urged, proclaimed or implemented during the Whitlam era'.

Chaired by Professor Peter Karmel (1922-2008), the Interim Report was tabled in the Federal Parliament in May 1973, six months following the Whitlam election victory. An economist, Karmel had been Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University (1966). At the time of his appointment to the Interim Committee of the ASC, he was head the Canberra-based Australian Universities Commission (Flinders University, n.d., n.p.).

The report first looked to existing deficiencies in Australian school education. It found three major deficiencies in Australian school education—lack of human and material resources, gross inequalities in the provision of resources and educational opportunities, and lack of quality in teaching, curriculum and school organisation (McLaren, 2014, n.p.).

In respect to equality, the Report (1973) stated it 'values the principle that the standard of schooling a child receives should not depend on what his parents are able or willing to contribute directly to it, or whether he [sic] is enrolled in a government or non-government institution' (1973, 11).

In addressing the perceived deficiencies in Australian school education, 'the Committee expressed the belief that schools should provide as nearly equal education for all children as was possible, enabling all to attain the minimum standards of competence necessary for life in a modern democratic industrial society' (J. McLaren, 2014, n.p.). The Committee (1973, 11) put it this way: 'The committee values the right of every child,

within practicable limits, to be prepared through schooling for full participation in society, both for his [sic] own and for society's benefits'.

In identifying needs of school education in order to bring about and sustain equality, the Committee took into account the historical background of school education in each state and territory. The Committee also 'assessed needs on the basis of the relative inputs of resources into the varying types of schools and school systems and of the particular needs of disadvantaged groups within the community' (J. McLaren, 2014, n.p.). Yet, clearly, each state and territory had their own specific needs in respect to provisions for school education. Consequently, the Committee sought 'to allow school authorities maximum flexibility in the use of funds while still acknowledging particular areas of need which should be the subject of national priorities' (J. McLaren, 2014, n.p.).

The Committee accordingly recommended seven programs of Commonwealth expenditure. *Schools in Australia* (1973):

- general recurrent resources grants (56-74),
- general buildings grants (75-81),
- primary and secondary school libraries (82-90),
- disadvantaged schools (91-108),
- special education (109-118).
- teacher development (119-125), and
- special projects and innovations (126-131).

J. McLaren (2014, n.p.) stated 'the first three of these were designed to equalise resources available to all students, the next two to meet the needs of particular disadvantaged groups, and the others to improve the overall quality of education'.

What about the private schools and colleges throughout the country, which had for at least a century nurtured the country's political elites and

commercial and industrial leaders—schools and colleges which under the Coalition governments of the previous twenty-three years had flourished, supplying the core of Coalition politicians? J. McLaren (2014, n.p.) observed: ‘The most controversial recommendations were that funds should be allotted to non-government schools on a needs basis, which involved phasing out grants to non-government schools already using a large volume of resources per pupil and giving proportionately greater grants to schools using fewer resources’. To this end, regional boards would, ‘be provided to oversee Commonwealth expenditure and make recommendations for future grants; and that the authorities receiving aid should be accountable to the Commonwealth for its expenditure and for the resulting use of human and material resources’. These controversial recommendations were based on analyses done in Chapter 5 of the Report (1973).

In 1975, in reviewing a collection of readings on the impact of the Australian Schools Commission, Homes (1975, 146) claimed: ‘The immediate impact ... [of the Report] can be summed up in three points: more money; an increased and improved debate and a shift in power from the States to Canberra’. Moreover, ‘the Report talks of ‘devolution of authority’, but its recommended hierarchical structure will insure that important decisions are made in Canberra, rather than by the States, regions or schools’ (146).

In fact, however, despite Homes’ (1975) concern for increased decision-making to the centre of Australian government, these developments took decades to evolve, such was the strength of federalism and political circumstances. Moreover, the Report (1973) ‘deliberately recommended that the Commonwealth should not become involved in the administration of schools and school systems, except in its own territories’ (J. McLaren, 2014, n.p.). Despite Homes’ (1975) contestations, the Commonwealth’s role, ‘was seen as being the determination of broad priorities and the provision of resources, not the conduct of education’ (J. McLaren, 2014, n.p.).

Specific Purpose Payment (SPP): Labor's 'charter of public enterprise'

Much of the ASC funding came from Specific Purpose Payments (SPP), commonly known as tied grants. Welch (2014, 46) noted: 'The use of these instruments grew dramatically during the Whitlam Labor government (1972-1975) (especially in the areas of education and health). The instruments were used as a means to enhance Commonwealth powers to make national policy, effectively using financial levers as a means to circumvent constitutional division of powers'. According to Welch (2014, 46), for Whitlam, 'the relevant section of the Constitution (Sectn 96, 25) "was Labor's "charter of public enterprise" because it enabled the Commonwealth to use its fiscal dominance to invade major policy areas of State jurisdiction' (Calligan, 2001, 25). As a result, tied grants rose from 2.0 per cent to 5.5 per cent of GDP, almost tripling their overall proportion'.

Welch (2015) goes on to state: 'Although the subsequent [Fraser] government reversed this process, it has continued since that era to the point where: "Tied grants became a distinctly coercive element in Australian federalism, a way for governments in Canberra to establish uniform national policies despite recalcitrant state governments" ' (Fenna, 2004: 74, cited in Welch, 2014, 46).

Significance and implementation of the Karmel Report

The Australian government accepted all recommendations of the Committee, except that of phasing out aid to the wealthiest schools over a two-year period. J. McLaren (2014, n.p.) observed, emboldened by its political success, 'the government decided to cease recurrent grants to these schools immediately. The Committee subsequently prepared a list of all schools outside the government and Catholic systems' where the children of the Labor Party's traditional voters were schooled. These schools were divided into eight categories of need according to the resources they used per student. State aid to schools in Category A, however, continued as Whitlam had to compromise, and part of that was that funding continued to Category A schools. At the end of 1973, schools in the next categories

received lower grants, and schools in the lowest categories received increased grants.

Most commentators (e.g., Allwood, 1975; Bessant & Spaul, 1976; Connell, 1993) agree Karmel's 1973 Report represented the first significant intervention by the Commonwealth Government in primary and secondary education on the basis of a comprehensive plan of goals and priorities, rather than an *ad hoc* response to particular demands as had been evidenced in during the decades since Federation.

The work and achievements of the ASC

Once described as 'the doyen of Australian Vice-Chancellors', Emeritus Professor Ken McKinnon was one of Australia's 'most senior educators, with experience at the highest levels in universities, schools and government. He was Vice-Chancellor of Wollongong University from 1981 until 1995. He was also Vice-Chancellor at James Cook University before coming to the NTU [Northern Territory University] as Interim Vice-Chancellor in 2002-2003' (Emeritus Professor Ken McKinnon AO, 2002, n.p.). He was first Chairman of the Australian Schools Commission (1973-81).

In September 2010, McKinnon contributed a paper (McKinnon, 2010, n.p.) to the seminar on the Australian Schools Commission and School Funding Seminar, University of Melbourne. His paper was titled 'The Australian Schools Commission and School Funding'. McKinnon's paper 'explored further the federalism aspect of the ASC'.

McKinnon (2010, 8) stated: 'While the Schools Commission was still in its interim phase before the legislation was passed, he commissioned independent advice from the leading constitutional lawyer of the day, Professor Geoffrey Sawyer, on the constitutional validity of the Acts and the implications for implementation of programs of the way they were framed'.

The various clauses of the Australian Constitution, McKinnon (2010, 8)

pointed out ‘education fundamentally remains a State power’ (s.107). Another Clause (s.96), however, empowers the Commonwealth to make grants to the States for such purposes as it thinks fit, not excluding education, ‘under such conditions as it wishes’ (McKinnon, 2010, 8). In fact, ‘money for the Schools Commission Programs was authorized under separate legislation entitled *States Grants Acts*’ (McKinnon, 2010, 8).

McKinnon (2010, 9) further made an important point about Clause (s.96): ‘The states and territories can refuse these grants. Hardly likely, however, given the dire condition of their treasuries: Thus the States retained negotiating powers over the nature and purposes of education grants and their mode of administration, even though the States were to find it politically difficult to refuse large grant offers’. Significantly, ‘administratively the implication was that the Commission would have to get and keep senior State Education officials on-side if programs were to succeed’ (McKinnon, 2010, 9). As with Skilbeck and the CDC, McKinnon (2010, 9) reported ‘fortunately, this need coincided with my view of the importance of frequently consulting front line educators of all kinds, which became a signature mode of operation of the Commission’.

McKinnon (2010, 8) emphasized, ‘no litigation eventuated from the States or major recipients of grants’. That is, except for DOGS, which finally was lodged with the High Court in 1978, challenging the constitutional validity of the grants to non-government schools. Centering on s.116 of the Constitution—the section forbidding laws establishing religion, etc.—the challenge claimed this Section prohibited grants to non-government schools. The claim was not upheld in the Court’s 1981 decision, but ‘the example illustrates the parallel issue of federal powers that was always part of our thinking in the Commission’s first years’. The implications of this decision are described later in this chapter.

The year 1998 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Karmel Report (1973). Accordingly, the ACER organised a national conference in October 1998 first to honour Professor Peter Karmel in his concluding year as Chair

of the ACER Council and Board of Directors, and secondly to assess developments since 1973. With Whitlam attending and speaking at the conference dinner, some of Australia's leading academics and researchers were in attendance. The conference noted with the establishment of the ASC, 'the Commonwealth Government became involved with school education in Australia in a new and major way with the establishment of the Australian Schools Commission in 1973' (ACER Conference, Abstract, n.p.).

Referring to the research undertaken by Johnson (1983), Lingard (1998, 1) went on to state the ASC systematised the Commonwealth's role in Australian school education and 'marked the high point and the beginning of the end of the social democratic Keynesian settlement of the postwar economic boom years. This is despite the contradictory articulation of such a social democratic vision of schooling by the Schools Commission ... and well into the eighties and probably until its demise in 1987 under Minister Dawkins'.

On Whitlam's death, Kelly (2014, n.p.) assessed Whitlam's contribution to Australian school education. First, for Kelly, Whitlam's initiatives were about re-securing the 'the defection of the pro-Labor Catholic vote'. Thus, 'having changed the policy at the 1969 federal conference, Whitlam, in office, gave priority to the 1973 Karmel report, a blueprint for funding schools on a needs basis'. Indeed, 'with some adjustments the Whitlam schools model endured for decades, purging Labor and the country of its sectarian past'.

What were the long-term achievements of the Whitlam Government in respect to federal engagement with school education? According to Lingard (1998), Whitlam's achievements were primarily about the national imperatives of equity in the three sectors of education—schools, TAFE a higher education. It was the duty of the Commonwealth to make these provisions.

Whitlam (1985, 315) himself has argued ‘for the first time, national resources were harnessed for the express purpose of providing adequate standards in education. For the first time, all students could expect to achieve equal opportunities in education’. For Whitlam (1985, 315), ‘the most enduring single achievement of my government was the transformation of education in Australia’.

The author’s Tasmanian recollections of these developments

As a young teacher in my fifth year of teaching following my graduation from Launceston Teacher’s College, I recall then I had little idea of the significance of 5 December 1972 Whitlam Labor Party election victory for Australian education generally, and for my career in particular. I had just received my first promotion as a senior teacher at Bowen Road Primary School in Hobart’s northern suburb of New Town. I was making a special effort in the science curriculum, and working closely with science curriculum educators from the Faculty of Education of the University of Tasmania and science curriculum educators at the newly established Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (CAE) (Hobart). By the end of 1973 and following the implementation of most of the recommendations of the Schools in Australia ‘Karmel Report’, I was encouraged to apply for the position of science consultant (state), commencing at the beginning of the 1974 school year. Three regional science consultant positions also were advertised at the same time. Indeed, there were a plethora of curriculum consultancies advertised at that time—mathematics, language arts, performing arts, fine arts, social sciences, librarians, curriculum designers and physical and outdoor education.

We all began our appointments as curriculum consultants with a two-day live-in conference at Port Sorell on Tasmania’s North West Coast. Many school principals, policy people and Department of Education bureaucrats were also present. ‘Karmel’ money also was funding a one-off school without walls—Tangara School (Phillips, 1985). The two teachers from this school were also present at the conference—Mike Middleton and Fran Bladel, both of whom were to make a major contribution to Tasmanian

education and politics. For me at least, high optimism and enthusiasm were dominant emotions at the conference, and were sustained by me for my four years in the position.

The emerging influence of Australia's CAEs

Except for being state-owned and state-controlled, albeit, federally funded, Australia's CAEs were similar in ideals and physical facilities to Australian universities of the period. These CAEs offered shorter courses, such as certificates and diplomas, and were initially excluded from awarding degrees, which were the purview of the universities. However, in 1974 having graduated with a BA from the University of Tasmania, I was able to enrol in a MEd degree at the Tasmanian CAE (Hobart). Both the Launceston and Hobart divisions of the Tasmanian CAE at that time were offering four-year trained BEd courses. A major difference between Australia's universities and CAEs, was however, the CAE staff were not required to undertake research, were generally on lower pay scales than their university counterparts (Treyvaud & McLaren 1976; Home, 2012).

By the mid-1980s, Australia's CAEs were undergoing a name change. In Tasmania, 'under the *Advanced Education Amendment Act (1985)* the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (TCAE) became the Tasmanian State Institute of Technology (TSIT) (TSIT, n.d.). 'The name change was seen as necessary to distinguish it from Community Colleges at Secondary and TAFE level and was seen as desirable since 'institute' had become an accepted term for tertiary education facilities in Australia' (TSIT, n.d.). This was occurring at much the same time around Australia. In 1987, I went to work at the Darwin Institute of Technology, which had grown from the Darwin Community College.

The TSIT essentially carried on performing unchanged the function of the old TCAE in providing post-secondary education under the 1985 Amendment. However, the TSIT ceased as a separate Institute with the repeal of the 1968 Act under the *Higher Education (Amalgamation) Act (1990)* amalgamating the University of Tasmania, the TSIT and the

Australian Maritime College (TSIT, n.d.). Under the well-researched and euphemistically titled ‘Dawkins Reforms’ of the Hawke Government this was the final phase of the history of Australia’s CAEs and institutes of technology (Marginson, 1986; Johnston, et al, 1988).

Professional development: the Tasmanian Centre for the Continuing Education for Teachers (CCET)

While the academic staff at Australia’s CAEs and later the institutes of technology generally were not as well qualified as academic staff in universities (Potts, 2011), during their history CAEs and institutes of technology had a greater impact on Australian school education. However, when the so-called Dawkins Reforms finally were bedded down, Australia’s universities began policies of community involvement and continued to influence school education (Marginson, 1986; Johnston, et al, 1988). These initiatives, however, were established strongly during the time of the CAEs and institutes of technology. The history of the University of Tasmania’s Centre for Continuing Education for Teacher (CCET) will serve to illustrate this point.

Primarily to upgrade teachers’ qualifications from two-year trained (certificate) or three-year trained (diploma) in 1975, the University of Tasmania’s CCET was established as a co-venture between the Tasmanian CAE, UTAS and the Department of Education. During its planning years, the Tasmanian CAE took the principal initiatives, with the university granting the awards. Commonwealth money through the ASC recurrent funds supplied two executive staff and payment for the sessional lecturers. ASC capital funds supplied the sites for CCET—the newly refurbished Hobart, Launceston and Burnie Teachers’ centres, the Hobart and Launceston centres being recently vacated teachers’ colleges. ‘There was a huge demand for qualification upgrades, and for me with all the other occurrences during these years, I consider them the most exciting and rewarding in my professional career,’ emphatically states Ken Milton (2014), a mathematics education academic originally from the Claremont High School, the Hobart Teachers’ College, later the CAE and the

University of Tasmania. ‘We carried with us the old commitments of professional development from our days in the teachers’ college, and the influx of the ASC funds provided for many of my colleagues and myself what was to be the halcyon years of Tasmanian education’ (Milton, 2014). With falling demand and decreased state and federal funding, the CCET ceased operations in 1990.

What else made these early years of the history of the ASC’s involvement in Tasmanian schools and colleges significant? For Milton (2014), ‘there were many things—all contributing to a wonderful sense of renewal and rethinking of education in our schools and colleges. For example, at the time we had a wonderful Superintendent of Curriculum—Hugh Campbell. During the same time, a young Tasmanian secondary school teacher had graduated with a PhD—Michael Pusey—and Campbell ensured the Education Department employed him on any occasion to have him address teachers and principals on his findings in his thesis’ (Milton, 2014).

Indeed, Pusey had journeyed off to Paris, to the Centre de Sociologie to research a PhD under its Director, Michael Crozier. Back in Tasmania, with Campbell’s support, Pusey did much of his research while being employed at the Tasmanian Education Department’s Curriculum Branch. When the doctorate was awarded, Campbell had multiple copies of it done and distributed to key personnel in the department. It was later published by John Wiley & Sons as *Dynamics of Bureaucracy: a case analysis in Education* (1976). I explained in Rodwell (2009) how few studies are more revealing of the existing retarding and impeding forces, albeit, at times, latently, within the Tasmanian Department of Education.

During the years 1974-76 as a primary science consultant, centred at the old Hobart Teachers’ College in Hobart’s Glebe I was tasked with establishing a school-based science curriculum (SBCD) for the state. Indeed, the years of the ASC paralleled the school-based curriculum movement throughout Australia. In Tasmania I also worked as a sessional lecturer with UTAS, the

CAE and the CCET, where I lectured and workshopped on the principles and practices of school-based curriculum development.

I attended several national conferences on SBCD in science during 1974 and 1975, national conferences being a hallmark of the popularity of the movement which had international dimensions (Skilbeck, 1984, 1990; Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980; and Marsh, et al). While I was undertaking these activities I completed a MEd with a thesis on Malcolm Skilbeck's typology of school-based curriculum development Rodwell (1979) *The Applicability to the Tasmanian Education System of Skilbeck's Typology of School-based Curriculum Development (TCAE)*. In its third year, the TCAE began offering master of education (Med) degrees. Martyn Cove (1975) has recorded these developments in respect to teacher development in Tasmania, recording his criticisms of progress as well as perceived achievements.

In 1977, I began a five-year appointment as a vice-principal at Rokeby Primary School on Hobart's Eastern Shore. The school was classified as a disadvantaged school under the ASC compensatory education funding arrangements. Here, I witnessed the manner in which students benefitted from Commonwealth involvement in school education, as was evidenced in material grants and generous staffing, particularly in the school library, physical education facilities and facilities and programs for students with special needs. The developments here were replicated in other states (Berkeley, 1975; Broadhead, 1975).

The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC)

In policy terms, Skilbeck (2015b) argued recognition should be made of the close connection of the CDC to Schools Commission (ASC): It was 'a key instrument of education policy at the school level' (n.p.), as indeed, the ACER in 1998 recognized. This was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Karmel Report (1973), the founding document of the ASC. Accordingly, as stated earlier in this chapter, the ACER organised a national conference in October 1998 first to honour Professor Peter Karmel in his concluding year

as Chair of the ACER Council and Board of Directors, and secondly to assess developments since 1973 (ACER Conference, Abstract).

Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) reminded us ‘it was strongly held by some members including its chairman, that the CDC should not have been separately established, but incorporated in the Commission’. However, ‘some saw the Commission as a dominating—or domineering—federal force and the CDC as more cooperative, under Fraser. I believe from many discussions with him—reporting meetings—that Education Minister Senator John Carrick saw the CDC in this light’. Perhaps, this is another call to recognise the role of strong individuals in sustaining educational policy.

Whitlam’s centralist ‘new federalism’ attempted to extend Commonwealth influence to new areas. By contrast, conservative Fraser’s new federalism, with Carrick as his Minister for Education, emphasised ‘state rights’ (Gillespie, 1994). Changes to the nature of coordinative federalism under the Fraser Governments following the Whitlam sacking of 1975 were significant. With the conservative-dominated states and territories resenting what they perceived to be their loss of authority Fraser put into effect a new policy of coordinative federalism. The outcome was an agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories in which both levels of government agreed to a system of co-operative planning and decision-making (Hinz, 2011, n.p.).

Working with John Carrick and his ilk: the CDC

A reading of the *CDC Act 1975* (*CDC Act, 1975*) testifies to its prescribed function (Aust Gov. ComLaw, n.d.).

5. (1) The functions of the Centre are:

- (a) to devise and develop, and to promote and assist in the devising and development of, school curricula and school educational materials;
- (b) to undertake, promote and assist in research into matters related to school curricula and school educational materials;
- (c) to make available or supply school curricula and school educational materials;

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- (d) to collect, assess and disseminate, and to promote and assist in the collection, assessment and dissemination of, information relating to school curricula and school educational materials;
 - (e) to advise the Minister in relation to making payments under section 7 or 8; and
 - (f) to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the foregoing functions.
- (2) The Centre shall perform its functions in accordance with any directions given by the Minister and shall furnish the Minister with such reports as he requires (n.p.).

Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) stressed ‘the CDC was the last of a raft of measures to strengthen the role of national government in education. Prior to enactment, the CDC had been established with an interim council in 1973 and operated under an acting director until later 1975 (n.p.). Moreover, for Skilbeck (2015a) ‘the establishment of the CDC was part of a growing interest especially in the UK and the US, but also in western European countries generally—Germany and Scandinavian countries especially—in curriculum reform and renewal’.

In this respect, especially in sciences and the social sciences, developments in the UK with the Nuffield Foundation were important (2015a, n.p.). Important also were science and social sciences curricula developments in the US utilising learning theories being advanced by theorists such as Robert Gagnè and Jerome Bruner, often backed by private support. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gave active support to countries where efforts to rethink school curriculum were from the late 1960s underway or felt to be needed.

Indeed, when comparing the role of the CDC and that of Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority’s (ACARA) National Curriculum, it is like comparing chalk and cheese. In tune with the ethos of coordinative federalism of the period, the CDC strictly played a supportive, consultative and coordinative role, producing syllabus material that might in particular support school-based curriculum development (SBCD) and generally enrich curriculum defined in its broader context. Skilbeck (2015b,

n.p.) stresses the importance of recognising ‘the CDC operated on a quite different understanding of “curriculum” and on the kind of authority appropriate to extra-school bodies’.

Piper (1987, 3) assessed the significance of the CDC as being of key importance as it institutionalised the Commonwealth’s entry into the curriculum area. It raised the level of public debate and public awareness of curriculum issues in Australia and stimulated the dissemination of ideas across state borders. It created, ‘for the first time in any sustained sense a genuinely national presence in curriculum development and reform in Australian schools’.

Kennedy (1990, 1) argued ‘over a fifteen year period ... the Commonwealth ... sought ... a role in relation to the curriculum of schools. The concept of a national curriculum agency working cooperatively with the States and the Commonwealth [had] won support from both sides of the political spectrum. Yet in operational terms, it could not deliver exactly what policy-makers wanted’ (1). Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) noted: ‘I wonder whether they knew “exactly” what they wanted. On the process thesis, there was no static occasion of policy equilibrium. Understandings and expectations were then—as now—evolving’.

Kennedy (1990, 1) goes on to note the CDC was a Commonwealth body ‘rather than being truly national in character’, a point contested below by Skilbeck (2015a). While in the ‘the functions of the Centre’ the CDC was authorised to enter into national curriculum development (Aust Gov. ComLaw, n.d.). Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) agreed, and adds as ‘founding Director ... I have a very clear understanding of the purposes and nature of the CDC as it was initially established’.

The author of this research recalls in 1976 being interviewed for a position as a state curriculum person in Tasmania for the CDC. Skilbeck chaired the interview panel. I recall the main role of this state-based CDC curriculum person was to discuss with the state curriculum people their needs and the

needs of Tasmanian schools so the CDC might meet the state at their various points of needs. Under budgetary measure by the Fraser Government the position never materialised. However, in respect to Tasmania's involvement in the CDC, Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) pointed to the need to 'pay tribute to Athol Gough [then Tasmanian Director-General of Education] who, as a representative of the states/territories on CDCs board was a most active supporter and exponent in his own office and person of the federalism [at which this section of the research is directed]. Indeed, another pointer to the role of individuals in sustaining educational policy.

Skilbeck (2015a), however, is at odds with Kennedy's (1990) assertion of the CDC being Commonwealth-focussed, rather than purely national in character. Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) contended: 'To state that the CDC was a Commonwealth body, 'rather than truly national in character' is to beg the question of what the term 'national' might connote. For Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), readers need to be aware of any dichotomies in the uses of the words 'commonwealth' and 'national'. While the CDC was a 'Commonwealth body', Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) observed it was 'of course true inasmuch as it was established as a statutory authority under Commonwealth legislation and that its Council and Director were accordingly accountable to the Commonwealth, not the states'. Core funding came from the Commonwealth government and staff, with the exception for the director—a statutory officer—were Commonwealth public servants. And there were people seconded from the states. On the other hand, Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) reminded us: 'Its stated purposes, policies and programmes and operation of the CDC were national'. Indeed, for Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), 'with very few exceptions our work was nationwide in scope and effect, the production of educational strategies and materials resulted from national agreements and detailed collaboration. The overall resources available to the CDC, in cash and kind, included substantial state and territory investments'. Indeed, Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) reported how, 'in collective and individual meetings with Directors-General and Catholic and Independent School authorities, on behalf of the Governing Council of the CDC, I was frequently commended for the national, collaborative style of our operations'.

In respect to governance, for Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), the CDC sought to work within the framework of coordinative federalism: ‘The Governing Council of the CDC was representative of relevant interests, not only of the state, territories and Commonwealth, but also parents and teacher unions, universities and colleges’. Moreover, ‘the Governing Council never, during [his] term of office, divided over state-Commonwealth lines and worked harmoniously and productively, at least as I observed and participated in its business’ (n.p.). Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) recalled: ‘A high-level official from the Queensland Department of Education was a most active, supportive Council member through the period when the Social Education Materials Project [SEMP, and described below] ban was effected’.

In response to the overall impact of the CDC, Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) asked readers to consider, ‘the CDC publications during its first five years or so of its operations’, showing ‘the extent and range of its work in creating and developing not only curriculum materials in a narrow sense, but its adoption of an approach whereby ideas about teaching, learning and education more generally were discussed and assessed’. Moreover, ‘the CDC, together with its state, Catholic and independent school partners, with university, college and school associations, parent groups, unions and other associates and partners designed, developed and published a large array of educational resources’. Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) recalled ‘these included in addition to classroom resources for learning, guidelines for teachers, discussion papers, and ideas for example on multiculturalism, arts education, language teaching and learning, evaluation, Aboriginal education, R&D strategies and many others. In fact, ‘notably among them was the publication *A Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* produced from the work of a committee we established under the chairmanship of distinguished physicists Sir Marcus Oliphant’.

Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) added: ‘Further examples of the extent to which the CDC was prepared to extend the scope of its understanding of its remit were the publication of a text on the inservice education of teachers and of the

notable work of Australian education scholarship’. Skilbeck looks to the CDC’s publication of W.F. Connell’s (1980) *A History of Education in the Twentieth Century World*. This work was concurrently published by Teachers’ College Press, Columbia University, New York. Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) noted ‘the latter volume engendered considerable discussion before gaining the Board’s approval’. The author of this research particularly is thankful for the decision. For several decades he used the text as a standard work in his history of education courses at Australian universities.

This is an important instance in the CDC’s notion of curriculum. Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) noted: ‘Since the *CDC Act (1975)* defined school curriculum to include ‘methods and procedures for use in connection with teaching and learning in schools’ we felt that we were not exceeding our statutory responsibilities’. Further, Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.) recorded: ‘Our concept of teaching was that it is or should be moving towards a learned profession as that term is understood in the scholarly community. Moreover, we saw reformed teacher education as absolutely fundamental to the success of the school-based curriculum development we favoured—as against centralist syllabus imposition’.

For Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), ‘publications show the result of our awareness of the need to think of curriculum in terms of the diverse and diffuse nature of the experience of learning’. Also, Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) stressed: ‘Whether created or only disseminated, materials are a means, but they certainly did not exhaust the Centre’s understanding of “curriculum” under my directorship or, I think, of my successors’. Further advancing the CDC’s expansive use of the term ‘curriculum’, Skilbeck (2015a) contended: ‘Reviews of the programmes and reports of a number of national conferences organised by the CDC together with the reports prepared for and following them are indicative of this broader use of the term ‘curriculum’.

With the advent of the CDC, by the mid-1970s the word ‘national’ increasingly was being associated with the word ‘curriculum’ in Australia. But it was to remain a pipedream for many decades to come.

The CDC and coordinative federalism: relationships with the states and territories

Under Skilbeck's leadership, how did the CDC operate in relation to the dominant mode of federalism at the time—coordinative federalism?

Writing in 1990, Macpherson (1990, 212) described a general dissatisfaction in some quarters with the CDC: 'Some [i.e., people interviewed] remembered the CDC practice first initiated in the early-1980s of meeting regularly with Directors of Curriculum from Education Departments'. Further, for Macpherson (1990, 212) 'these meetings were, ironically, reputed by some to sustain the problems they were intended to resolve. According to various legends, CDC personnel tended to be "offensively innovative" while directors tended to be very determined and "protectionist" people leading large curriculum development "empires of their own" '. Macpherson (1990, 212) further described how, 'some recalled how the CDC materials had been used to serve parochial political ends. Other outcomes were reported to include bitter boundary problems, damaging inter-state comparisons, and resistance myths such as "the states know best"'.

In reporting on the responses to his interviews, Macpherson (1990) wrote there were negative responses to the work of the CDC. Clearly, in some states and territories there was some degree of discontent with the CDC. Perhaps these were the larger states which were 'comfortable' in their own curriculum efforts in traditional curriculum and policy development. Here there were entrenched and conservative ideas concerning what students in schools should be taught, and the extent of Commonwealth leverage. If some complained about unnecessary Commonwealth political influence on the curriculum, twenty-five years later these influences assumed new dimensions under the ACARA National Curriculum and another *zeitgeist* and form of globalism and economic rationalism, accompanied by a changing federalism (Bourke, 2014, n.p.).

Within the bounds of coordinative federalism, the national curricula activity, however, was not plain sailing for Skilbeck and the CDC. Skilbeck (2015a) alerted us of the often-fragile relations between some states and territories and the Commonwealth. The larger states such as New South Wales with its powerful and well-resourced Board of Studies at times objected to their perceived intrusion of the CDC into their traditional territory. Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) wrote: ‘Federal-state cooperation during the years of the Whitlam government and thereafter under Fraser was often fragile’. In fact ‘New South Wales, for example, strongly resisted what it regarded as Commonwealth intrusion into areas of state responsibility and the Schools Commission was openly criticised during the years I was in Canberra (1975-81), for using its financial muscle to shape or impact upon state policies, programmes and practices’.

That particular line of objection, however, was likely to have been more at a territorial, professional level, other objections came from politicians. Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) noted ‘co-operative federalism’ [or coordinative federalism] was a slogan often observed in the breach. [For example] the Queensland Government, under Premier Bjelke-Peterson, was frequently in dispute with the Commonwealth and banned the use of the CDC’s SEMP material in that state’s schools’.

Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.) recalled the Queensland ban ‘was the result of intense lobbying by Christian fundamentalist groups and Mrs Rona Joyner in particular’. For many Queensland teachers, however, Joyner herself and her ideology were perceived as being the problem (*Queensland Teachers’ Journal*, 2006).

Generally, however, for Skilbeck (2015a, n.p.), ‘in this environment, during the first five years when I was Director, the CDC strove to work in full practical cooperation not only with the states and territory governments but also with Catholic and Independent school authorities. It was not just the overall approach of the Commonwealth required effective collaboration’. Skilbeck ‘remained a strong federalist in the

sense of the full exercise of state rights and responsibilities in education. Apart from the Queensland ban ... relations were close, cordial and productive. There were, of course, differences over specific matters and there will be various views as to how important these were’.

A change of direction for the CDC: an assessment of its achievements

By 1981, the CDC was refocussing its initiatives towards national goals, and perhaps already coming under some influence of economic rationalism, globalism, and even, perhaps the risk society. The *zeitgeist* of the Whitlam-Fraser years was merging into something new, and would be manifest in a new federalism that some researcher such as Lingard (1991) would label corporate federalism. This view was evidenced by David Francis, Skilbeck’s successor, at the CDC, who stated in his Triennial Report how now, its ‘role will become focused increasingly in what might be termed matters of national significance’ (CDC, 1981, viii). For Francis, now ‘these include its program in school-based curriculum development and core curriculum, needs and priorities in relation to major national initiatives, such as multiculturalism and the educational requirements of work and leisure’ (CDC, 1981, viii). Pointing the way to what soon would be the norm, Commonwealth funding for school education now had a more specific national purpose. What would the following decade hold for the national curriculum body? But first, there is a need for an analysis of the work of the CDC in respect to federalist paradigms.

Utilising Reid’s (2005) research, and in attempting to assess the period 1968-1988 in respect to federal-state-territory relations in school curriculum, Drabsch (2013, n.p.) argued the period was one of ‘indirect influence’, wherein the ‘approach to national curriculum development during this twenty-year period was one that sought to influence the official curricula of the States without challenging their curriculum authority’. In 2013 in response to the Abbott Coalition Government the New South Wales Parliament was preparing legislation for the state to accommodate the ACARA Curriculum. According to Drabsch (2013) attempts by the

Commonwealth to introduce a national curriculum between 1968 and 1988 failed because: ‘(i) the sensitivity to the curriculum autonomy of the States resulted in many of the projects being organised on a federal model where key aspects of projects were located in State-based teams. It diluted a national perspective and allowed the States to maintain their control of the official curriculum’ (Reid, 2005, 150-175, cited in Drabsch, 2013, n.p.). And ‘(ii) The project-based focus of the national collaboration meant that curriculum change was piecemeal and open to shifting political whims’ (Reid, 2005c, 150-175, cited in Drabsch, 2013, n.p.).

Skilbeck (2015b) challenged Drabsch (2013) by arguing ‘there were in my view global as well as national and local forces at work whereby the ideas of the CDC era were almost inevitably translated into what is emerging as a consolidated national model for school curriculum’. Indeed, for Skilbeck (2015b, n.p.), ‘these forces—in no sense narrowly political at least in any party political sense—are much more complex and deeply rooted than ‘shifting political whims’. Moreover, the ‘project-based focus’ is in the line of ascent—or descent as I may think!—with the national-level approach which has “projected” the new syllabuses’.

Moreover, this is an assessment consistent with the author of this research whose experiences provided by his 1976 interview by Skilbeck for the Tasmanian-based CDC position referred to above. The dominant mode of federalism during the Whitlam and Fraser governments allowed for little else. In respect to the ‘political whims’ to which Drabsch (2013) referred, under successive twenty-first century federal governments of both persuasions the influence of ‘political whims’ would take on vastly new dimensions—at a time when Drabsch (2013) wrote her paper.

Moran (1980) showed the greater part of the work of the CDC was involved in coordinating projects such as the SEMP, and the Language Development Project (LDP) during the period between 1973 and 1981. In Tasmania, LDP and SEMP had teams of curriculum people, usually teachers who had shown high classroom effectiveness and focus. Attached to the Tasmanian

Department of Education's Curriculum Branch, here there were six teachers employed with Commonwealth funds for a three-year period, developing materials (Brewer, 2008, cited in Rodwell, 2009).

Political constraints and funding restrictions during the tailend of the second Fraser government checked the success of this initial period, forcing the CDC to close between 1981 and 1984. Hughes and Kennedy (1987) reported when reactivated as one of four divisions of the ASC the CDC was required to collaborate more extensively with state education departments and other educational organisations on projects of curriculum development. As Skilbeck (2015b) noted this was what some Commonwealth policy people wanted back in 1973 when the ASC was formed.

Analysis and conclusions

In the midst of the Fraser era, Whitlam (1977) declared: 'To return Australia to pre-war federalism is to ignore the immense national growth in the demand for government services during the past 30 years. The responsibilities of governments are vastly more extensive, complex and costly than they were. Education is a striking example' (n.p.). For Whitlam (1977), Australians owed much to the Commonwealth for school education. Indeed, 'there would be scant opportunities for higher education today, and very little decent secondary education, if it were not for Federal participation and initiatives. The Federal Government, with primary responsibility for economic management, fiscal policy and the allocation of resources, simply cannot ignore the rising demand for such services' (Whitlam, 1977, n.p.).

During the Whitlam-Fraser epoch, this national sentiment for an increased Commonwealth presence in traditionally state responsibilities such as health and education was expressed strongly in the *zeitgeist* of the time, providing the moment for Kingdon's policy strand. Although, of course Fraser's 1975 victory and his promised 'new federalism' could be seen as a desire, nationally expressed, to withdraw a little from these centripetal federalist forces. Yet, Fraser's 'new federalism' was as much a move to appease those

who had railed against what many perceived to be Whitlam's form of strong centralist federalism. But in the finish, except for a short-lived increase in Commonwealth funding for private schooling, the federalist direction established by Whitlam continued.

Any Whiggish interpretation of the development during the period would entail a narrative concerning governments seeking to develop policies in school education to progress the nation's economic, social and cultural standing, and opportunities for individual advancement, particularly in hitherto perceived neglected groups—for example, generally improving educational opportunities for women, migrants and Indigenous groups. Of course, this may well be so, as any study of speeches, for example, of politicians may show. But these measures by both Whitlam and Fraser were also about power—attaining it and sustaining it. Social conflict theory contended these motives were at the heart of government policy development.

The ASC and other Whitlam initiatives followed twenty-three years of *ad hoc* Commonwealth involvement in school education. The model of the pressure cooker is apt. Large sections of society were looking to the incoming Whitlam government to do something for them in respect to school education. In terms of Kingdon's model this was the problem stimulating possible policy development, and for Whitlam any sustained national response would advance his government's credentials at any future election. And the history of the period showed there was no shortage of political will in developing policies towards those ends.

Despite accusations of centralism and brash confrontationalism, and the huge political upheavals of the second Whitlam Government, Whitlam's brand of coordinative federalism ushered in a period of enormous change in federal-state-territory relations, manifesting in equally massive changes in school education. As Lingard (1998, 1) concluded: 'This was not an *ad hoc* intervention—the articulation of seven programs constituted for the first

time in Australia's political history a systematised approach by the federal government to schooling, it was nonetheless an approach driven by politics'.

It was not, however, simply the needs-based recurrent federal funding which changed the face of Australian school education, although this was at the core of the changes. There was a host of other programs drastically altering school education. With the changes to Australian universities and the consolidation of the CAEs, teacher preparation and development were undergoing massive changes. Teachers were being trained and educated longer, and as the Tasmanian experience of the CCET exemplifies, with an increase in the cooperation between state authorities. There was, moreover, a vast increase in a sense of experimentation in school education. There were experiments in different approaches to schooling. Through SBCD, teachers were encouraged to experiment with curriculum in ways better suiting the needs of their students. Teacher centres flourished as centres for learning, and after-school meetings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Corporate Federalism: the Hawke and Keating years (1983-1996)

Introduction

During the Hawke and Keating years, school education was indelibly imprinted on the national political scene. Of course, this government was coming off a huge base in the form of the Whitlam Government's ASC, where the principle of equity through Commonwealth educational policy was ineradicably benchmarked.

Hawke Labor came to government with a huge majority, but there were vast lessons to be learnt from The Dismissal. Portraying public images of well-considered change and consensus were important. Many supporters, perhaps, looked to Hawke and Susan Ryan, Minister for Education, to take up from where Whitlam and Beazley had left off. But the world had moved on, and already the influences of globalisation, economic rationalism, and arguably, risk society were emerging. Observers could see Hawke had the numbers in parliament to institute massive changes in school educational policy. From whence would it come?

Federalism was undergoing changes. Now during this epoch federalism increasingly was being known as corporate federalism, a nomenclature with problematic origins, but most commonly attributed to Lingard (1991). What would this mean for school education students? The nomenclature was ominous.

The political momentum of the Hawke governments

Hawke led Labor to government in 1983 in a landslide victory, ‘the greatest Labor win since the 1943 election when John Curtin led the party’ (NAAa, n.d., n.p). In the Senate the numbers were such that Hawke only had to negotiate with the Democrats and Senator Brian Harradine from Tasmania. Negotiating legislation was a ‘cake walk’. Moreover, it had only been seven years since the fall of the Whitlam Government, and consequently there was ample political experience in Caucus. In the December 1984 ‘catch-up election’ Hawke’s Labor was returned, but with a much-reduced majority. In the July 1987 election, Hawke’s Labor won an historic third successive election, increasing its majority in the House. Despite a swing to the Coalition in the March 1990 election, Hawke’s Labor again won. This was Hawke’s last federal election, resigning from parliament on 20 February 1992 after Paul Keating defeated him in a leadership ballot in December 1991 (NAAa, n.d., n.p.). Keating went on to defeat John Hewson, Liberal Leader at the 1993 election in the so-called unwinnable election, with eighty seats to forty-nine, and Nationals sixteen and two independents.

Indicating the looming presence of the risk society and its impact on Commonwealth government school education policy—described in more detail in later chapters—were developing anxieties of climate change and its impact on government policy. In 1991, the Hawke government considered a carbon tax, but it was rejected due to lack of economic evidence. According to Iggulden (2016) ‘a cabinet submission from 1991 mentions a “carbon tax for energy use” as well as a “carbon tax-type” tax based on “all greenhouse gas emissions, for all source activities, including industry, energy, agriculture, transport” ’ (n.p.). The submission, however, fell upon bad economic times: They ‘were rejected because of a lack of information about their effects on the economy, which was then in a year-long recession’ (Iggulden, 2016, n.p.). While the appropriate policy window—expressed in Kingdon’s (1984/2003) terms—for a carbon tax may have been missing for the Hawke Government in 1991, education policy fared more positively.

Hawke's education initiatives

From the Fraser years, federalism had moved on from the old coordinative federalism of the previous epoch. The 1980s and 1990s were very different from the 1970s. Corporatism, globalism, economic rationalism and the risk society had arrived. It was problematic how long the previous arrangements of massive federal funding of Australia's three educational sectors could last. After all, Fraser had warned Australians there was no such thing as a free lunch. Soon the 'bean counters', the accountants, would have a greater say in educational policy. The whole language of educational policy would change, as it adopted business values. Words such as 'benchmarks', 'stakeholders' and a whole host of other 'corporate' words would enter educational school policy discourse as the old Whitlamite values gave way to corporate principles and international competitiveness associated with globalism. Of course, the principle of equity remained, but increasingly it was linked with corporate values.

The Hawke and Keating governments pushed forward Commonwealth engagement in public school education, making full use of its political opportunity, at the same time moving Commonwealth funding away from the private sector. Typical of the now changed educational funding circumstances came with this incident at Question Time early in the history of the Hawke Government. Alexander Downer, Liberal Member for Mayo, and future Leader of the Opposition, moved:

This House condemns the Minister for Education:

- (1). for her failure to respond to representations made to her by members of the Adelaide Hills Montessori School and the Member for Mayo through written correspondence on the 7 January 1985, and telegram on the 1 February 1985;
- (2). for allowing the uncertainty of funding arrangements for the Adelaide Hills Montessori School to linger on for almost 2 months without response, and
- (3). for allowing this situation to extend into the 1985 school year, causing confusion and concern amongst the staff, students and parents of Adelaide Hills Montessori School (CofA, No. 140, 1985, 242).

The seat of Mayo in the Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island had long returned Liberal Members, and was unlikely to attract Susanne Ryan's, Minister for Education, attention, particularly in respect to maintaining the level of funding for a private school, a member of the educational sector which had prospered under the previous Fraser Coalition Government.

In education, the early Hawke ministry under Ryan returned to the old values of the Whitlam years. Ryan and Bramston (2003) reported how Ryan widened educational opportunities, while at the same time increasing equity between public and private school funding. Increased funds were made available for most schools, and the TAFE and higher education were expanded. Indigenous school education also improved under the Hawke government, as demonstrated by the government providing funding of almost \$100 million from 1984 to 1992 for parental education, student support and tutorial assistance through its Aboriginal Education Direct Assistance Program. Moreover, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Capital Grants Program was established to construct and renovate school buildings in remote area communalities.

Generally, government expenditure on school education under Hawke also rose significantly. On a per-student basis, the increase in Commonwealth funding amounted to 136 per cent for government schools and seventy-one per cent for non-government schools. Addressing the long-standing Labor commitment to equity, Ryan established a Participation and Equity Program providing around \$250 million mainly to schools with low retention to the end of secondary education from 1983 to 1987. Partly resulting from a greater financial assistance to students from low-income backgrounds, retention rates dramatically increased. The percentage of students in secondary education rose substantially, from thirty-five per cent in 1982 to seventy-seven per cent in 1992 (Ryan & Bramston, 2003).

Assessing the Hawke-Keating Government's initiatives in school education

What were Hawke's lessons from the Whitlam years? For Kelly (2014, n.p.), it is not so much the euphoria of the three short Whitlam years that is important for Labor history, but rather what this dream and disillusion taught another generation of Labor leaders: 'Whitlam became a template for didactic reformism, but after his [1975] defeat the trio of Bill Hayden, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating knew that Labor's future depended on purging Whitlam's blunders from its soul'. However, 'the Hawke-Keating era from 1983 to 1996 succeeded where Whitlam failed—it integrated economic management with lasting social reform and, unlike Whitlam, put a premium on competent government'.

Kelly (2014) argued 'this is why the Hawke-Keating era is superior to the Whitlam era. It is also the reason Bob Hawke is a greater prime minister than Whitlam' (n.p.). Certainly, that statement has some credence if stable government—and admittedly, little can be achieved without that—and economic reform are the measures by which we make the judgement. In respect the Commonwealth's engagement with school education, the Whitlam Government won 'hands down' in regard to its sheer ambition and scope. Given, however, Hawke and Keating set out to be more circumspect in economic management than was the Whitlam team, how did Hawke and Keating manage Labor's national school education agenda?

Somewhere around 1988, the education agenda in the Hawke Government changed. Dawkins had squeezed Ryan out of the portfolio. With her went the old Whitlamite principles. This is best represented by the struggle over the introduction of Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). HECS and Dawkins were in, and Ryan was out (Ashenden, 2012). This was politics and agenda-setting and implementation. It was all about the looming presence of economic rationalism, the rising tide of globalism, and arguably, the imminent presence of the risk society, the overall influence of a changing form of federalism.

In his Chapter 1, Kingdon (1984/2003) explained why and how particular issues come to dominate the government and decision agenda. He makes a distinction between the development of issues and alternatives. Issues are the broad areas of concern—in this case perceived competent economic management—while alternatives such as the Ryan agenda of the old Whitlamite educational agenda was the alternative, albeit a fading one. Labor was hungry for power, and the memories of 11 November 1975 were still very raw. Labor was doing well in the polls, and economic rationalism and HECS was capable of public acceptance.

Gwilym Croucher (2015, n.p.) wrote for *The Conversation*: ‘The release of the 1988-89 cabinet documents show that the Hawke government’s plans for Australian higher education were in some ways as radical as the policies that Education Minister Christopher Pyne floated in 2014’. Indeed, ‘Dawkins oversaw some of the biggest changes to higher education in Australia, including the introduction of HECS in 1989. This was at a time when the Hawke government had already gently shocked the country with a series of major economic reforms which changed Australia, including floating the Australian dollar’. While peripheral to the main focus of this research, these changes do illustrate what was happening inside the Caucus at the time, indicating the fate of the old Whitlamite ideals in the face of economic rationalism and globalisation.

The Hawke-Keating years connected Australian school education with national economic purpose, bringing the nation’s schools into a global competitiveness. This was a cause of some tensions inside the early Hawke governments—the arm wrestle between those ministers who adhered to the Whitlam ideals and those economic rationalists and globally oriented ministers who saw money spent on school education as primarily an economic investment, rather than an investment in equity and social and cultural capital.

***Zeitgeist*: economic rationalism and towards globalisation**

If Whitlam indelibly branded the *zeitgeist* of his time with his own name, Hawke did so with the term economic rationalism and globalisation. For me, it all crept up rather slowly, but it was the so-called Dawkins ‘reforms’ announcing HECS in 1989 alerting me to what was soon to become known as economic rationalism. I soon realised the term was a label referring to a great many things, often reflecting a political ideology (Battin, 1991, as cited in Whitehall, 1998). Thus, Hawke’s idea of economic rationalism is likely to be very different from Tony Abbott’s.

Economic rationalists tends to favour deregulation, a free market economy, privatisation of state-owned industries, lower direct taxation and higher indirect taxation, and a reduction of the size of the welfare state. Internationally and domestically, economic rationalists surrounded Hawke and Dawkins et al. Near-equivalents include Thatcherism (UK), Rogernomics (NZ), and the Washington Consensus, a term coined in 1989 by English economist John Williamson (Battin, 1991, cited in Whitehall, 1998). To a large extent the term merely means economic liberalism, or neoliberalism. The label, as this chapter will demonstrate, however, was also used to describe advocates of so-called market-oriented ‘reform’ within the ALP. This was a position closer to what sometimes has become known as the ‘Third Way’, a term used to represent a position attempting to reconcile right-wing and left-wing politics by advocating a varying synthesis of right-wing economic and left-wing social policies. Arguably, Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister best represented this view (Battin, 1991, cited in Whitehall, 1998).

The fact that Hawke Labor adopted this brand of economics and politics can be attributed to its looming *zeitgeist* during the 1980s, perhaps inherited from Fraserism, and reflecting the risk society. After all, Fraser had become synonymous with the term ‘there’s no such thing as a free lunch’. The now dominant negative use came into widespread use during the 1990 recession, and was popularised by Pusey’s (1991) highly acclaimed *Economic rationalism in Canberra*.

Ranked by the Australian Sociological Association as one of the ten most influential books in forty years of Australian Sociology, Pusey's (1991) *Economic rationalism in Canberra* provides a powerful beginning point to examine the influence of economic rationalism on federalism. Arguably, this study more than any other stimulated public discourse about governments becoming involved in policies based economic realism, and the effect this might have on individuals and social groups.

The process of deregulating the Australian economy began in 1983. Australia was copying the blueprint laid down by Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US. In Australia the process began under the Hawke-Keating Government, starting with deregulation of the financial system. Subsequent Coalition governments have continued the process. Economic rationalism has a number of elements (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005).

In seeking to define the term economic rationalism, Whitehall (1998, n.p.) showed the term was an Australian term associated with 'microeconomic policy, applicable to the economic policy of many governments around the world, in particular during the 1980s and 1990s'. Interestingly, in his book Pusey does not provide a succinct definition of the term economic rationalism. Following research, however, by Burchell (1991), Whitehall (1998, 1) contended Pusey has argued 'economic rationalism is the dogma which says that markets and money can always do everything better than governments, bureaucracies and the law. There's no point in political debate because all this just generates more insoluble conflicts'. Indeed, 'forget about history and forget about national identity, culture and 'society'... Don't even think about public policy, national goals or nation-building. It's all futile. Just get out of the way and let prices and market forces deliver their own economically rational solution' (Whitehall, 1998, 1). This is a huge step away from the thinking underlying school educational policy of the Whitlam years.

According to Whitehall (1998), Manne (1992) offered a more satisfactory argument in characterising economic rationalism as ‘a profound suspicion of all forms of state intervention in economic life and an almost equally profound faith in the beneficence of unfettered, or almost unfettered, market forces’ (Manne, 1992, 8, cited in Whitehall, 1998, n.p.).

Revealing his own political-economic bias, Whitehall (1998) argued his preference for John Stone’s definition. Stone was a former conservative politician and public servant. He served as Secretary to the Treasury between 1979 and 1984. An informal advisor to Queensland’s longest-serving Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, he was elected to the Australian Senate from Queensland as a member of the pro-Bjelke-Petersen National Party contingent at the 1987 election. Liberal Party leader at the time, Howard appointed him as the Opposition’s finance spokesman. There was considerable animosity between Stone and the then Treasurer, Paul Keating (Stone, 2013).

Stone’s conservative view of economic rationalism, according to Whitehall’s assessment, should be noted: ‘Generally speaking, markets usually provide more satisfying answers to questions of choice, consumer preference and so on—and in doing so, provide a more rapidly advancing level of total well-being for all concerned—than decisions by diktat, whether those be by politicians, bureaucrats or controllers, generally’ (Stone, 1992, as cited in Whitehall, 1998, n.p.). There was never one-size-fits-all brand of economic rationalism: It all depended on the particular political party in power. And, of course, even within a particular political party there would be a range of views. However, these developments should be seen against an international backdrop.

Knight and Warry (1996, 2) have noted there were ‘considerable similarities in recent developments in education policy across a wide range of OECD countries. “Globalisation”, “economic rationalism”, “structural unemployment”, “human capital theory” and “corporate managerialism” seem to be dominant influences here’. Of course, across these OECD

countries there were also substantial differences, depending on their own history, traditions of governments and socio-economic framework. Thus, for Knight and Warry (1996, 2), ‘any adequate analysis of the current Australian situation must take into account not only its policy texts and prescriptions but those factors which frame them’. Moreover, ‘in addition to the generally prevailing influences of globalisation, transnational capital, ‘the market’, fiscal crises and the emerging post-keynesian, post-welfare state settlement, we draw attention to the specificities of the Australian context’ (Knight & Warry, 1996, 2).

Through globalisation, economic rationalism and the impending anxieties of risk society, school education in the Hawke-Keating years was changed dramatically.

Hawke and Keating’s corporate federalism and education policy

For Lingard (1991, 86), the Hawke government, ‘set in train a new form of federal-state relations which is classified as “corporate federalism”. This ... has developed most strongly in the schooling policy domain, particularly in the Dawkins period’.

Much has been written about the new federalism of the Hawke and Keating Labor governments. Hinz (2010, n.p.) claimed: ‘While all Commonwealth governments have recognized and exploited to varying degrees their fiscal and constitutional dominance over the states, the nature and degree of federal power over states and is considered to have increased sharply under the Hawke (1983-91) and Keating (1991-96) governments’. Hinz (2010, n.p.) went on to argue this ‘new federalism’ agenda, true to the economic rationalist agenda ‘was driven in part by the desire to remove overlap and duplication which were perceived as obstacles to national economic reform and international competitiveness’.

Comprising drastic overhauls of fiscal relations and ‘renovations to intergovernmental institutions’ in the Commonwealth’s favour, the Hawke-

Keating Government realigned federalism. Hinz (2010, n.p.) explained: ‘The Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations was dismantled, and the annual Special Premiers Conferences (relatively informal meetings at which Commonwealth funding ‘offers’ were presented to states) were replaced by ... [COAG], which emphasized intergovernmental cooperation and agreements on policies and ‘national issues’. Hinz (2010, n.p.) reckoned: ‘This was particularly prevalent in education, evidenced by Hawke’s landmark policy, *Strengthening Australia’s schools*, and Keating’s *Knowledge nation* election platform’.

Lingard (1991, 30) explained how corporate federalism is heavily nuanced ‘by a number of discourses and practices, including neo-corporatism, economic rationalism, corporate managerialism and a reconstituted human capital theory. The amalgam of these discourses constitutes a technology of power’ (Foucault, 1979). Moreover, following research by Head (1983), Lingard (1991, 30) explained: ‘Corporatism, or neo-corporatism, is ‘a tendency for elites—capital, trade unions and the state—to determine key areas of economic policy through formalized agreements and consultations’.

Lingard (1991, 86) adds the Hawke Government made full play with neo-corporatism with the ‘Accord—between the trade unions and the Labor government—the economic summit held immediately after Labor won power in 1983, the tripartite bodies such as the Economic Planning Advisory Council (EPAC) and the industry councils, are neo-corporatist policy instruments used by the Hawke government’. Moreover, for Lingard (1991, 87), and following research by Schmitter (1974, 93), ‘neo-corporatist politics can also operate in the non-economic spheres through sophisticated systems of interest representation’. This was another Hawke policy approach.

Benchmarking federal-state relations in school education was the Hobart Declaration (1989) and the Adelaide Declaration (1999). For Lingard (1991, 87), ‘neo-corporatist negotiation at the AEC has been central to the emergence of a national approach in schooling with the resulting ... Hobart

Declaration on national goals for schooling and a national curriculum framework and a range of subsequent developments, including the creation of the Curriculum Corporation', finally sealing off the fate of the CDC. Additionally, Lingard (1991, 86-87) explained, with its call for a '“national effort to strengthen the capacity of our schools” the Dawkins-authored May 1988 document *Strengthening Australia's schools* was the first fully articulated expression of what this paper calls corporate federalism'.

In his Chapter 8—'the Policy Window, and Joining the Streams'—Kingdon (1984/2003) described a 'policy window' as being similar to a 'launch window' for space rockets. The central idea is there are specific windows of time in which the rocket can launch, and if it misses the window, it has to wait for the next one. Governments, however, can assist in the construction of that window if they have political opportunity—that is, sufficient support in parliament, and in the federation. Hawke's and Dawkins' Hobart Declaration attempted just that.

A policy window in Kingdon's model is the particular period of time in which an issue, alternative, and problem can be coupled together and make it onto the decision agenda. The windows can open because a particular problem is brought to the forefront by a government report—or a sufficiently powerful moral panic. That was the purpose of the Hobart Declaration. A window opening also can even be routine—as with the federal budget, and Pyne's attempts on the Abbott-Turnbull Government in 2014 to move public debt in university funding to a private debt by privatising university funding (McPhee & Savage, 2014). When the window is open—as with the Hobart Declaration—for Kingdon (1984/2003) a policy entrepreneur must be ready to tie all streams together to push the issue to the decision agenda. The entrepreneur has to be ready when the window opens to take action immediately.

What happens, however, when there is a change of government, as there was with the Howard Government in 1996? Of course, at some politically opportune moment the process will commence again. Hence, we have the

Adelaide Declaration of 1999, a time of peaking political opportunity for Howard and his Minister for Education, Dr David Kemp.

The Commonwealth and national school education: an overview of policy focus during the Hawke-Keating epoch

In the thirteen-year period (1983-96) of the Hawke-Keating Government one could only expect a varied approach to federalism and the Commonwealth's approach to the education agenda. Indeed, Knight and Warry (1996) contend two relatively distinct periods can be mapped out for the Hawke-Keating Labor governments: 1983-1987, with Susan Ryan as Commonwealth minister for education and youth affairs; and 1987-1996 with John Dawkins and his successors as Minister for Employment, Education and Training.

The Susan Ryan years (1983-87)

Susan Ryan was a creature of Whitlam-inspired progressivism. Here, according to a Knight and Warry (1996, 1) with Ryan Minister of Education 'a series of relatively progressive national policy initiatives were set in train'. With John Dawkins as Minister, there was a distinct embracing of business values, and according to Knight and Warry (1996, 1) 'a marked shift to policies driven substantially by a larger program for national reconstruction and microeconomic reform'.

Ryan served as an ACT Labor Senator between 1975 and 1987. Her Whitlamite progressivism was most apparent during her role as Minister for Education in the Hawke Government. She was appointed Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women. She was Minister for Education in the second Hawke Ministry and opposed the re-introduction of fees for tertiary education despite strong support in Cabinet for the user-pays principle. She lost the education portfolio to John Dawkins in the third Hawke ministry.

What were the principal achievements during her six years as Minister for Education? Macpherson (1990, 207) summarised the developments under

Ryan in the Hawke Government, following a decline in its vote in the 1984 ‘catch-up’ election, noted above. Here in the 1987 election, ‘The Hawke government regained the initiative ... with three interconnected strategies; it established the new DEET to obtain greater coherence in youth and education policies, reviewed and rationalized the roles of all associated statutory bodies, and separated and reallocated policy advisory, policy making and policy implementation powers’.

Now, the Australian Schools Commission) and national interest groups had a new setting ‘to advise the Federal Government on the funding and co-ordination of education; the National Board of Employment, Education, and Training (NBEET). Four representative councils were established: the Schools Council (SC), the Higher Education Council, the Employment and Skills Formation Council, and the Australian Research Council (ARC)’ (Macpherson, 1990, 207).

Henceforth, most of the key policy development went to the AEC. All, however, was not well in the Commonwealth’s relationship with states and territories. Continuing dissent particularly came from the Terry Metherell, New South Wales Coalition Government’s Minister for Education administering the powerful NSW Board of Studies, the body responsible for curriculum matters. New South Wales and the Northern Territory were the sole representatives of conservative governments in the Commonwealth. Growing anxiety over ‘shifting centres of power, state Ministers and officials were beginning to smart under their increasingly marginal role in educational policymaking. They adopted a traditional tactic; they cast doubts on the cost-benefits of Commonwealth support to the state systems’ (Macpherson, 1990, 208).

For Macpherson (1990, 208), it was ‘significant that these latter tensions were then eased to a degree when Hawke and Ryan began using the AEC as a forum to develop general agreements and bilateral understandings on resource distribution’. The establishment of COAG would provide similar opportunities, albeit with a reduced opportunity for bipartisanship.

Opposition from non-government schools

Susan Ryan was appointed Age Discrimination Commissioner in 2011 during the Gillard Government, and on the release of the 1984 Cabinet papers, Ferrari (2013) from *The Australian* interviewed her on the issues confronting the Gillard Government in respect to needs-based funding and opposition from the private school sector. This latter sector highlighted the entrenched opposition from a sector which had been well looked after by the Fraser governments. Ferrari (2013, n.p.) wrote: ‘The hot-button issue in education in 1984 was ... school funding’. In fact, ‘Ms Ryan’s most trenchant opposition was from private school parents, who took to the streets in protest at their schools losing any money’. She ‘was met with a lot more hostility than has been evident now,’ she said. “It was quite ugly. There were a lot of protests, mainly by parents of well-resourced schools”’. Ferrari (2013, n.p.) reported Ryan as stating ‘these days the aspect of entitlement is not around in public discourse but back then there was a huge sense of entitlement and they had the view that no commonwealth funding was enough. They wanted more and more’.

Of course, we do not know from which part of the ‘well-resourced’ non-government school sector these angry parents came—well-off Catholic, or well-off private schools. One assumes, however, with the huge popular support the Hawke Government was enjoying at the time, in a political sense these events did not too greatly disturb her.

The Dawkins years

With Dawkins as Minister for Education, there was according to Knight and Warry (1996, 1) ‘a marked shift to policies driven substantially by a larger program for national reconstruction and microeconomic reform’. In short, there was a much more discernible embracing of economic rationalism, and a more discernible response to influence of globalisation (Croucher, et al, 2013).

The author of this research had taken an academic position in the Faculty of Education at the Darwin Institute of Technology in 1987. Responding to

federal initiatives in 1989, there were moves to amalgamate with the Northern Territory University College, a part of the University of Queensland. Throughout Australia the old CAEs were undergoing forced amalgamations with universities. Some academics vehemently opposed these moves. Others, including myself, supported them. I did not, however, support the other emerging consequence of the Hawke Government, namely, Outcome Based Education (OBE). Although some of my colleagues did.

Dawkins visited Darwin to discuss the amalgamation with staff from the two institutions and interested community members. I attended these meetings, and it was about this time I realised the stark differences between Whitlam's Government and the Hawke Government. HECS was also on the agenda. Many traditional Labor supporters, perhaps, were still coming to grips with a Labor Government imbued with economic rationalist agendas. More, however, was to come. After Keating's unexpected victory in the 1993 federal election, Dawkins brought down a budget containing a series of highly unpopular revenue measures which were seen as an attack on Labor's traditional supporters. Frustrated with Cabinet opposition to his so-called 'reforms' Dawkins resigned from Cabinet and Parliament in December 1993. The economic rationalist agenda, however, remained on course (Croucher, et al, 2013).

The beginning of the politics of school retention rates

During the second Hawke ministry, Australia's economic circumstances were causing alarm in Cabinet and the greater Australian economic polity. In late 1987, Dawkins and A.C. Holding, Minister for Employment Services and Youth Affairs, issued a booklet, *Skills for Australia*. Its opening sentence flagged what the next two decades held for federal-state-territory relations in school education: 'Skills and skill formation policies are of central importance to the task of structural adjustment facing Australia' (Dawkins & Holding, 1987, 1).

For Dawkins and Holding (1987), education and training systems must play an active role in this process. The retention rate to Year 12, forty-nine per cent in 1986, had to reach sixty-five per cent by the early-1990s. To achieve this it would be necessary to make the final years of secondary education more attractive. At the same time the ‘quality, structure and flexibility’ of education and training also had to be improved. ‘More needs to be known about levels of competence achieved by our students at school, especially in the core disciplines of language, mathematics and science’ (Dawkins & Holding, 1987. 2).

Dawkins elaborated the message in his May 1988 statement, *Strengthening Australia’s schools*, calling for a ‘common curriculum framework’ and greater emphasis on higher levels of literacy, numeracy and analytical skills (Dawkins, 1988). The Minister added that this common framework should be complemented by a common national approach to assessment. This ushered in a period of OBE where student learning was stated in demonstrable and measurable outcomes very similar to the behavioural objectives curriculum movement a decade earlier, represented by theorists such as Robert Gagné.

Under this new educational ethos, Year 12 retention rates also became a concern for governments and policy-makers. According to a 2000 survey conducted by the ACER and the federal government, thirty-five per cent of state school students completed Year 12 in 1984. By 1994 the number of students completing Year 12 had risen to seventy-four per cent (Marks, et al, 2000). Despite the fact there was a levelling off of gain following 1994, this was a massive improvement in participation. Here we are not so interested in movements in these retention rates, or how they were being measured, but rather what was driving the government’s newfound interest in retention rates and how this related to issues concerning federal-state-territory relations in respect to school education. The Commonwealth was bringing pressure on the states and territories to keep students at school or college through to Year 12. At the heart of these concerns were economic

rationalism, globalisation, and some might argue, a response to risk society thinking.

When did the Commonwealth become interested in school/college retention rates and why? The ABS had been collecting data on school retention since at least 1968 when government schools showed an apparent retention rate of 20.4 per cent, Catholic schools of 27.5 per cent, other non-government schools of 76.3 per cent, and an all school apparent retention rate of 22.7 per cent. By 1984, respectively, this had increased to 38.4 per cent, 54.6, 92.7, and 45 per cent. By 1992, this further had increased respectively to 73.8 per cent, 76.0 per cent, 101.5 per cent, and 77.1 per cent. Following this there was a slight decline (Burke & Spaul, 2001, n.p.).

The retention rate in schools did increase, but not simply by making the senior secondary years 'more attractive'. The Commonwealth abolished the dole for adolescents aged 16 to 18 years as from 1 January 1988. It was replaced by Austudy assistance for those staying at school and a Jobsearch allowance for those not doing so, the maximum rate being the same for both. The dole was no longer more attractive financially than being a student. The new cohort of reluctant students in Years 11 and 12, however, required adaptation of the curriculum; raising the proportion staying to Year 12 and raising standards of achievement (Burke & Spaul, 2001, n.p.).

Burke and Spaul (2001, n.p.) further explained the reasons for this increase: 'During the 1980s, State and Federal Labor Governments revived the Whitlam Government's distributive justice stance to the continuing inequalities in secondary education, but without its commitment to investing heavily in public education'. Moreover, 'special Commonwealth programs to increase participation and equity strategies in public high schools, and a major extension of the student assistance scheme, helped stem the retreat from secondary education'. Consequently, 'the benefit level was increased and the income test on parents eased. The numbers receiving at least some assistance expanded rapidly from 145,000 in 1988, or about 40% of those

aged 16 and over, to 235,000 in 1992 or about 55% of those 16 and over' (Burke & Spaul, 2001, n.p.).

Clearly, this interest in school retention rates increased under the influence of economic rationalism. At the time there was a common reference to the influence of 'bean counters' on educational policy. Usually, these accountants were referred to negatively. This was macro accountability. Government were spending increased amounts on education, and retention rates were one way of measuring the outcomes of these increased budgets. This also was the politics of school retention rates, and in some states they became major election issues, perhaps deciding the outcomes of state elections (Rodwell, 2016d). Of course, it also connected with unemployment rates: Students at school lessened the number of dole recipients.

The founding of COAG: a move to vertical, or managerial, federalism

A key supporter of Keating, Dawkins became Treasurer in December 1991 following Keating's unseating of Hawke as ALP leader and Prime Minister, in his second and successful leadership challenge. The Minister of Education was Kim Beazley (Jnr). One of Keating's first initiatives in May 1992 was to establish COAG, replacing the Premiers' Conference. The latter body has been held for many decades, and was limited to the premiers of the six states and the prime minister.

Meeting for the first time in December 1992, COAG is an organisation consisting of the federal government, the governments of the six states and two mainland territories and the Australian Local Government Association. A related organisation is the Loan Council, which coordinates borrowing by the federal and state and territorial governments of Australia.

In a research paper for the NSW Parliamentary Library Research Services (Griffith, 2009, 7) characterised the COAG process 'as a form of "managerial federalism" ... administrative in its mode of operation, pragmatic in orientation, concerned with the effective and rational

management of human and other resources, and rich in policy goals and objectives'. Here, 'the States play a creative and proactive part but are, to a substantial degree, service providers whose performance is subject to continuous scrutiny and oversight. Typically, the financially dominant Commonwealth Government plays the manager's role'.

The Commonwealth, thus, provides the managerial federalist role. There is, however, a horizontal managerial federalist role option for the states and territories. This is the Council of Australian Federation (CAF). For Wanna, et al. (2009), 'cooperative federalism can operate either horizontally, by the States and Territories acting together without reference to the Commonwealth, or vertically, in those policy areas where the Commonwealth involvement is required' (Wanna, 2009, Chapter 3, cited in Griffith, 2009, 7). School education, thus, fits the latter role.

COAG and educational policy

What are the reality and implications of COAG's role in education? As far back as 1996, Lingard stated 'at a national level in education, the process of ministerialisation of policy making has seen a considerable augmented policy function for the ... AEC, and subsequently for its replacement ... MCWEETYA' (Lingard, 1996, 83). Importantly, 'the process of supra-ministerialisation, that is, the strengthened policy hand across government of Premiers and Prime Ministers, also has witnessed the enlarged policy interests of Premiers' conferences and in particular ... COAG' (Lingard, 1996, 83).

Lingard (1996, 83) showed COAG being responsible for 'the National Asian Languages and Cultures Strategy, set up the Industry Commission review of the efficiency of State systems of schooling and recommended the AEC be replaced by the new body, MCWEETYA'. These developments were major responses in schooling, vocational education and training, including the growth of an Asian education market, which was becoming a booming export commodity.

Moreover, Lingard (1996, 83) alerted readers to the ‘clear gender implications of these processes of ministerialisation and supra-ministerialisation, given the dominance of males amongst politicians’. More profoundly, ‘complementary to these developments has been the increased number of political advisers in Ministers’ offices, who are often young, male, university graduates with appropriate political credentials’.

As Lingard (1996) stated, this increased number of political advisers in ministerial offices has resulted, in part, in a gross politicisation of state and territory educational bureaucracies. A decade later we can assess better the implications of this last point. My (Rodwell, 2009) research into the demise of the Tasmanian ELs curriculum can be attributed partly to the gross politicisation of the Tasmanian Department of Education (Chapter 4) in much the same manner as Lingard (1996) described.

Moreover, according to some researchers the Australian Public Service (APS) fared little better in respect to politicisation. Writing two years following the Howard-led Coalition victory over the Keating Labor Government, Mulgan (1998, 3) concluded the ‘politicisation of the APS, in the sense of appointments to suit the preferences of the government of the day has been gradually increasing over recent decades’. For Mulgan (1998, 6), ‘the process has been given added impetus by the growing insecurity of tenure among secretaries and by the sometimes uncritical adoption of private sector management models’.

Were Mulgan’s (1998) fears vindicated? Not so, stated Peter Shergold, one-time Head of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra. Shergold (2004, 6) six years later contended the APS is as true to the Westminster virtues, as ever: ‘The current view is that “accountability and responsibility Westminster-style no longer exists” and that the public service has been tarnished by, intimidation and demoralisation ... Instead, behind layers of secrecy, has been built a rotten edifice of “plausible deniability” designed to protect ministers from unpleasant truths’.

Shergold (2004) stated that, despite these manifold and scurrilous accusations of politicisation, the APS continued in the fine tradition, exemplified by bureaucratic *maestros* such as the late Sir Roland Wilson. However, many do not hold with Shergold's opinions. For example, Pusey (1991) had warned about this very thing back in the time of the Hawke Government in 1991.

More recently, these processes of ministerialisation and supra-ministerialisation through COAG have impacted on Australian school education principally through ACARA. These developments are detailed in Chapter Ten.

It should be noted, however, it was not all plain sailing for Keating and his newly formed COAG. Davies (2007) noted as early as 1993 Keating was 'rolled' by the states when he attempted to introduce a form of national school curriculum.

The politics of the AEC and the ASC: the establishment of DEET

We have seen above Hawke in his first two terms of government politically enjoyed a dream run from the Coalition Opposition which at the time seemed like a rabbit caught in the bright headlights of the Hawke charisma. The Commonwealth's leverage on states and territories in respect to school education policy during these years are paradigms of Kingdon's model of policy development and enactment, serving also to illustrate the strength of the political conflict theory of educational history. It was all about making the most of political opportunity. No more is this apparent than in the changes coming over the ASC during the Ryan years of the Hawke ministries.

The Hawke Government inherited from the Fraser Government an ASC, chaired by the Western Australian academic and ex-AFL footballer, Peter Tannock. Under Fraser, the ALP Left increasingly viewed the ASC as a creature of private schools. This perception was reinforced by Fraser's appointment of Tannock, an educationalist closely identified with the

Catholic education sector. The old sectarianism represented by groups such as DOGS ensured Tannock, Fraser and the ASC were reminded constantly of their affinities with Australia's private schools. These views were further reinforced when two representatives on the Commission of the public school teachers and parents dissented from the majority recommendations of the Commission in 1984—largely on the grounds the funding recommendations were biased strongly in favour of the private schools sector (Macpherson, 1990).

These general dissatisfactions with the ASC within Labor provided an opportunity for Ryan and others to encourage discourse concerning taxpayer money expended through Commonwealth on public school education. Of course, its real target was the money going to the private school sector (Smart, et al. 1986). Ryan instituted the Quality of Education Review Committee (QERC) chaired by Peter Karmel (1985), seeking to establish value-for-money indicators and to identify links between education and the labour market. The QERC process triggered a fundamental reconstruction of policy powers, and Tannock's resignation (Macpherson (1990)).

Tannock's resignation in January 1985 gave the government its chance to start redefining the role and functions of the Commission in ways designed to transform it by degrees from a political embarrassment into a political irrelevance. Now Ryan could manage a progressive transfer to the Department of Education of responsibility for major federal funding programmes for schools; isolating the divided ASC from governmental processes; squeezing its administrative resources; and destabilising its secretariat, particularly those working with the major programs the Commission had been identified with for over a decade during the Fraser years (Macpherson (1990)). Henceforth, increasingly the Commonwealth would dispense taxpayer funds for school education through the AEC and later COAG frameworks. The Commonwealth Department of Education also would have a role to play.

Macpherson (1990, 207) wrote: ‘The recommendations of the QERC Report and a Commonwealth Public Service review of the Commission led to decisions by Hawke and Ryan to transfer the administrative staff, responsibility and funds for the ‘big ticket’ ... [ASC] programs into the Commonwealth Department of Education’. Indeed, ‘in one fell swoop, the ... [ASC] was effectively neutered—albeit under the pretext of enhancing its capacity to concentrate on its primary function of giving policy advice!’

An outcome of this was the scrapping of the Commonwealth Department of Education and the consequent establishment in 1987 of the Department of Education, Employment and Training, signalling wider concerns for vocational education and employment.

A move towards a national curriculum: curriculum profiles

Reid (2005, 17) argued how the period from 1988-1993, encompassing Dawkins and Beazley as Ministers for Education—Dawkins (1988-1993; Beazley (1991-93)—entailed ‘full-on frontal assault’ towards Federal-initiated curriculum, saw ‘the most ambitious attempt at national curriculum collaboration in Australia's history’ but one which ‘foundered on the old rock of State-Commonwealth suspicion’.

The history of the implementation of the federal-developed curriculum profiles in Australian schools during the period 1986-96 is relevant to this research. The level of collaboration between the various state and territory departments of education and the Commonwealth was unusual, given the nature of this initial input in curriculum by the federal Labor Government. This was particularly surprising by today's standards, given the then mix of Labor and Coalition governments in the states and territories (Lokan, 1997). By mid-1993, the ‘statements’ (curriculum content descriptions) and ‘profiles’ (expected student learning outcomes) were complete in draft form for most of the areas, and were being submitted to the AEC—as the group of state and federal ministers of education and their chief executive officers was then called—for endorsement in mid-1993.

Some states sought and profited from the Commonwealth involvement in school education more than others. Tasmania was one such state. It had just implemented a major rationalisation, which included massive cuts to its Curriculum Branch, so much so that it barely existed as an entity. Fish (2008) recalled people in the higher echelons of the bureaucracy simply assumed any major curriculum initiatives would come from the CC and schools and colleges would purchase the materials.

In researching the history of the implementation of the federal-developed curriculum profiles in Tasmanian schools during the period 1986-96, Pullen (1997) reported the Statements and Profiles developed by the CC were the outcome of an ‘excellent collaborative process’ between reputable educationists—among whom were many of Tasmania’s own education professionals. For Pullen (1997, 122), they were a unique, valid and authoritative set of documents warranting ‘intensive study and use by schools and colleges and will prove to be essential to them as curriculum planning tools’. Moreover, ‘Tasmania accepted the Statements and Profiles intact—that is, they were issued to government schools and colleges with no alteration to their published form’. The two main reasons accounting for this decision, made late in 1993 by the then Minister for Education and the Arts were that Tasmania like other authorities ‘had made significant contributions to the planning writing and endorsement of the document and felt they represented a new curriculum resource which would be of value to the schools even if some relatively minor aspects of them might have been differently addressed had the development process been of longer duration’ (Pullen, 1997, 122). Moreover, ‘Tasmania intended all along to issue the documents as required resources for school curriculum planning, assessment and reporting, but not as the sole, immutable and definitive underpinning of curriculum’ (Pullen, 1997 123). According to Pullen (1997, 123) Tasmania ‘took the view that the Statements and Profiles as published represent an outstanding achievement in the creation of a new way of regarding Australian curriculum as the 21st century approaches’.

For decades, Tasmania was a claimant state in the Commonwealth in respect to financial arrangements (ABS, 1988, n.p.) By the 1990s this also applied to curriculum materials for school education.

Internationalising the Australian school education market

During the early-1990s, an influential book advocating for market ‘reforms’ in education was Chubb and Moe’s [1990] *Politics, markets and America’s schools*. Despite being primarily written about the education system in the US, ‘within a year of its release, this work was being quoted more than any other text on schooling policy ... including in Australia’ (Marginson: 1997a, 130). The logic of the argument contained in this work was simple: Schools and teachers would provide students with a better education if they were made to compete against one another. Therefore, a double regime of consumer choice—between schools and teachers—must be introduced. This simple argument has been used as an ideological justification for a wide range of so-called educational ‘reforms’ across many countries.

An index to the effect of Hawke-Keating drive to open and deregularise Australia’s markets, is the growth of international schools and schools offering the International Baccalaureate (IB). This was an obvious outcome of the internationalising of Australian school education market in the growing adoption by schools, colleges and education systems of IB, and its influence on Australian schooling. Consequently, one purpose of this section is to assess the growth of IB and its impact generally on Australian school education. Another purpose is to assess the influence of international agencies such as the OECD on Australian school education policy. Due to these transnational influences, education reforms are more often externally initiated, and multiple scales interact in the dynamics through which these reforms are negotiated, formulated, implemented, and even evaluated. For example, Australian educational policy makers constantly keep on eye on OECD statements and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores. But, first, a brief investigation of IB in Australia.

Bagnal (2005) showed IB has been in Australia since the mid-1970s. Beginning with the Goldring Committee of 1984, commissioned by Ryan, the rapid growth of IB, however, was from the mid-1980s. The committee's brief was to examine international student policy. It concluded 'the prevailing policy emphasis on subsidisation of international students should continue as part of international interest' (Bagnal, 2005, 113). The review, however, was to result 'in a shift in policy focus from international education viewed primarily as a tool for international aid, to a significant mechanism for generating export revenue and implementing international policy initiatives' (Bagnal, 2005, 113). Here, there is a major shift from the colonialist approach of the old Menzies-style Colombo Plan to a globalisation of school education. Admittedly, the large bulk of these international students were bound for post-secondary and university education, but increasingly they were enrolling in secondary schools.

Bagnal (2005, 113) showed the Jackson Committee of 1984, reviewing Australia's overseas aid, was a second review undertaken. The committee proposed 'a more market-oriented and less-regulated policy towards international students'. For Bagnal (2005, 113), 'the committee felt that the aid aspect of education should be more targeted and that private students should have unrestricted access to Australian education, provided they paid the full cost of services and met academic standards applicable to local students'. In line with emerging deregulation policies, the Hawke Caucus, won the day with the Jackson report. Then followed a 1985 report stating 'the introduction of full-fee courses for overseas students would reinforce the flexibility and efficiency of the education system and encourage an entrepreneurial spirit amongst institutions' (International Student Program in Universities, 1993, 17, cited in Bagnal, 2005, 113). Again, while the report was primarily focused on universities, the same principles flowed through to secondary schools, resulting in a considerable growth in IB, International Schools and general enrolments. The ABS (2007, n.p.) reported 'in 2005, there were 26,000 overseas student enrolments in Australian schools. Most student enrolments were in Secondary schools (91%), with just 9% in Primary schools (including Kindergarten). In

addition, 61% of student enrolments were in non-government schools and 39% in government schools'. There is an interesting parallel here with the massive growth in Malayan students in some New South Wales students during the early-1960s as discussed in Chapter Six.

Verger (2014, 14) argued, internationally 'globalization is profoundly altering the education policy landscape. It introduces new problems in education agendas, compresses time and space in policy processes, and revitalizes the role of a range of supra-national players in educational reform'. The processes in which this occurs are complex. Indeed, for Verger (2014 14), 'the contemporary global governance scenario, education policy processes cannot be analysed by simply looking at the conventional sequence of agenda-setting, policy design, implementation, and evaluation stages; nor by looking at these different moments simply from a national optique'. According to Verger (2014, 14), this '“deterritorialization” of the education policy process has important theoretical and epistemological implications'. Importantly, it is 'forcing comparative education scholars to pay more attention to the politics and dynamics involved in the “policy adoption” stage. Policy adoption is a moment that has acquired a great deal of strategic significance in current education reforms'.

Zajda (2012) reckoned internationally, in respect to neo-liberal systems globalisation, designed to achieve competitiveness, quality and diversity have impacted on education reforms in four ways: competitiveness-driven reforms, finance-driven reforms, equity-driven reforms, and quality-driven-reforms. Here it is argued 'forces of globalisation' have contributed to the on-going globalisation of schooling and higher education curricula, together with the accompanying global standards of excellence, globalisation of academic assessment (OECD, PISA), global academic achievement syndrome (OECD, World Bank), and global academic elitism and league tables, amounting to the positioning of distinction, privilege, excellence and exclusivity.

To what extent has globalisation influenced Australian school education policy? In her briefing paper on the Australian Curriculum to the New South Wales Parliament, and indicating the interest this question holds for politicians and policy maker, Drabsch (2013, 3) wrote: ‘The recent performance of Australian students in international tests such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has attracted much attention, particularly given that Australian students did not perform as well as anticipated’. Moreover, ‘the Federal Government had also recently announced its aim that the Australian education system would improve to the point where the performance of its students is in the top five countries worldwide’ (Drabsch, 2013, 3).

International competitiveness, indeed. The Hawke-Keating years manifested distinctive changes in school education, not least this element.

The CDC merges to the Curriculum Corporation (CC)

There is no more apt example of the onset of corporate federalism as portrayed by Lingard (1991) on school education than the fate of the CDC and its merging into the CC. Although for different political purpose the fate of the ASC was repeated with the CDC, illustrating again the relevance of Kingdon’s agenda-setting model as a lens to understand change in the history of school education policy. Change was underpinned by a quest for political power and a general shift in the *zeitgeist*, occurring when there was political opportunity. During the early years of the Hawke Government, education under Ryan’s leadership there was an obvious tussle between the economic rationalists and the non-believers, the old Whitlamites, such as Ryan herself.

Kennedy (1990, 5) observed: ‘A fundamental difference, however, between the vision of Skilbeck and Francis and that of later protagonists is that the former were (and are) professional educators. They were driven by progressivist and humanistic educational ideals and values’. Moreover, ‘the latter were (and are) instrumentalists—keen to ensure that investment in

education pays off with economic returns to the nation' (Kennedy, 1990, 5). Thus, 'while this is a significant difference, it should not be allowed to mask the fact that even for educators in the progressivist mould there was some attraction in the notion of a more nationally consistent approach to curriculum, especially if it could be driven by the progressivist ideals underpinning *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools*' (Kennedy, 1990, 5).

Kennedy (1990) is only partly correct. Perhaps he was writing too close to the massive changes occurring at the time. His paper does not mention the words federalism, economic rationalism or globalism. Nevertheless, clearly these were the forces impacting on Australia's national curriculum body at the time, and the CDC was responding to these. As Skilbeck (2015b) noted, for example, *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* was integral to the school-based curriculum development strategies, so dominant at the time in Australian schools.

In the light of the developments described in the above section of this chapter, the Commonwealth and the states and territories often saw the Australian Education Council (AEC) as being the most appropriate forum for national curriculum issues. In 1986 it accepted for the first time a role in the facilitation of national collaboration in curriculum. During its last years, the AEC was used as the most significant forum, especially in terms of the agenda the third and fourth Hawke governments pursued. The AEC, however, soon replaced the CDC as the forum for achieving national curriculum policy objectives (Kennedy, 1990).

In 1987 with the accession of the third Hawke government, the AEC was abolished and CDC was incorporated into the newly formed Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). On 1 July 1989, the reactivated CDC itself was abolished and replaced within a Curriculum Policy Unit, a section within the Schools and Curriculum Policy Branch. The materials development function itself was transferred to the incipient Curriculum Corporation (CC), a jointly owned company of the

Commonwealth and state ministers for education, excluding the New South Wales Minister, Terry Metherell (Kennedy, (1990).

In 1975, the Commonwealth legislated for the CDC, a definite attempt to develop forms of curricula, defined in its broadest terms, to participate in an important aspect of school education. Legislated for during a period of one of the most extremely hostile periods in Australia's political history, the CDC survived twelve years and three governments—Whitlam, Fraser and Hawke. It was not wholly political circumstances bringing the CDC to an end, but also a changing *zeitgeist*—from the progressivist Whitlam *zeitgeist* to the economic rationalism, bound up with globalist influences occurring at the time of the Hawke-Keating years. What contributed to its success?

Kingdon's *Agendas* encourages policy researchers and others interested in the history of educational policy to examine closely the influence of the *zeitgeist* and political circumstances (see, for example, Rochefort: 2016). Also, because it is a narrative of the relationship between the Commonwealth, the states and territories, this research looks to the operative form of federalism. Under Skilbeck's leadership, the CDC while being nationalist in outlook was managed in a coordinative relationship with the states and territories. While there were instances of politicians and educational bureaucrats objecting to what they perceived as interference in state and territory responsibilities, these perceptions were often motivated by political and professional territorial factors.

Kingdon's *Agendas* further stimulated researchers to look to political circumstances surrounding policy development, which need to be 'just right' for the legislation to pass (see, for example, Rochefort: 2016 Cohen: 2016). In the hurly burley of the last weeks of the Whitlam government the CDC came into being. Some readers may be surprised it survived the tough politics of the Fraser Government years, but it did so because it was at one with the dominant *zeitgeist* of progressivism. Generally, the output of the CDC was well received by teachers, curriculum professionals and other

bureaucrats, and it may have been a political challenge to close it down. This is another pointer to the wisdom of the choice of Skilbeck as director.

Skilbeck (2015b), however, challenged the use of the term ‘wisdom’ of his appointment. While conceding ‘statutory authorities sometimes arouse bureaucratic territorial jealousies’, he wrote of how he was ‘not sure about the ‘wisdom’ of my appointment. I think you might consider the role of heads of statutory bodies (and departments) in finding ways to maintain their organisations and certain ideals that underlie their functions in the crosscurrents of politics’. Indeed, ‘witness the present head of the Human Rights Commission [and the challenged its Chair, Professor Gillian Triggs is facing with the Abbott-Turnbull Government]’ (Skilbeck, 2015b). Moreover, ‘in the case of the CDC I think the positive relations I established with Senator Carrick (who had a strong interest in educational creativity and innovation) were important. For this, one critic called me ‘a running dog of the Liberal Party’! Little did she know (Skilbeck, 2015b). Skilbeck (2015b) recalled: ‘More important was the high productivity of the Centre spread across a diversity of modes and values’. ‘The triad, of core curriculum, non-mandatory, broad subject areas and thematic projects, and school-based curriculum development were central strategic thrusts. And there were as well issues papers, conferences etc. We targeted wide, influential audiences’.

While some state and territory education bureaucrats may have found the CDC tended to be ‘offensively innovative’, in a historical perspective, perhaps these can now be viewed as recalcitrants, and themselves out of touch with the progressivism of the times, and a general international movement towards national developments in curricula, broadly defined.

The critics have their say

Barcan (2003) challenged the whole notion of the influences of the *zeitgeist* influences of globalism and economic rationalism on the Commonwealth’s leverage of schools education during the period of the 1960s through to the 1990s. As with an out-of-control bull run on the stock exchange, he

considered what was occurring during the latter years of the Hawke-Keating period a massive correction of past excesses.

Barcan (2003) cited Boomer (1999), an educational administrator in both the South Australian and Commonwealth systems, and also a Chair of the ASC, who saw the period since 1960 as being one of ‘systemic schizophrenia in which official curriculum statements and actual curriculum practice in schools [had] become progressively more incongruent ... the sixties brought a breakout, the seventies an expansion of choice, but the eighties sought more emphasis on performance and accountability’ (Boomer, 1999, 127, cited in Barcan, 2003, 121). For some, the 1990s promised to be a decade of national reconstruction and curriculum frameworks, as the systems reclaimed the curriculum control lost to the schools in the seventies and early eighties. Both ‘the “hard Right” and the “hard Left” saw this as in the national interest, for different reasons’ (Boomer, 1999, 127, cited in Barcan, 2003, 121).

Barcan (2003) also looked to Dr Ian Paterson, principal of Knox Grammar School, Sydney, and a member of the Carrick Committee, then helping to reorganize New South Wales education, who took perhaps an even a starker view than did Boomer (1999). According to Paterson (quoted in McLachlan, 1989, cited in Barcan 2003, 121) ‘the teachers of the 1970s had their chance. It was their “golden age”’. For Paterson, during the period ‘teacher numbers doubled, salaries jumped, massive funds flowed into schools, school-based curriculum became the vogue, the authority of principals was sapped’ quoted in McLachlan, 1989, cited in Barcan 2003, 121). For Barcan (2003), by the end of the 1970s, it was apparent schools were not performing well, business and industry complained, the public began to ask questions. The result was a plethora of reports and investigations across Australia.

While Barcan (2003) and Boomer (1999) may have a strong case to argue, they do not mention the word globalism, although Barcan (2003) does analyse in some detail the influences of economic rationalism on school education.

Analysis and conclusions

With an enduring political climate, corporate federalism had delivered much for Hawke and Keating. At the end of their governments, principally through the work of Ryan and Dawkins as the responsible ministers, as with deregulation initiatives in, for example, Australian banking, Australia school education had undergone massive changes.

With the onslaught on globalisation and economic rationalism during the Hawke and Keating years, school education developed new dimensions for Australian students. The language and ideals of business merged with educational policy. Increasingly, measurable educational outcomes would become a part of curriculum and pedagogy. School and college students would now become a part of a national effort to improve Australia's international economic competitiveness, as coordinative federalism gave way to corporate federalism. It was not, however, without a struggle as some old Whitlamites sought to recapture the ideals of a government many felt were stolen from them on that fateful day of 11 November 1975—an opportunity lost, but now regained. Where would a new Labor leader take educational policy now Labor was back in town and the country's conservative forces in disarray? Perhaps!

Political motive subsumed developments in school educational policy during the Hawke-Keating epoch, thus strongly advancing a social conflict theoretical explanation. Although, neo-Marxists may find this period an opportunity to advance an argument the forces of national production, as represented by political elites and policy people, expanded educational policy in the interests of Australia's corporate world. This, however, is not argument for which this chapter provides space.

The Hawke-Keating era also provides ample evidence of Kingdon's policy stream. Here, political opportunity provided by corporate federalism, coupled with the powerful *zeitgeist* of economic rationalism and globalism was conducive to harnessing school education to a national purpose. The Commonwealth's leverage on states and territories was vastly increased.

While political circumstances afforded new horizons for the Commonwealth's leverage on school education, it is debatable whether or not the policy outcomes could be labelled progress or reform. They were, however, effective in changing the face of Australian school education. School and college students were now being harnessed to a nation-building effort. *Inter alia*, the products of schools and colleges now were export commodities, and in most cases there was bilateral agreement.

Certainly, however, the direction of these developments would be carried through to the incoming Howard Coalition Government, the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments and the Abbott-Turnbull Governments. It can be argued durable policies are sound policies.

CHAPTER NINE

Supply-Side Federalism and Globalism: the Howard Years (1996-2007)

Introduction

By any standards, John Winston Howard was one of the great political leaders of his time. He had learnt his political craft well. He knew how to survive and to make the most of any political moment. He well understood the basic principles of power, and how to tap into a national mood.

His political *maestro* was Menzies, and he had observed Hawke's performances at close quarters. Basic to political power was political stability. After being in and out of the role of Leader of the Opposition several times, he had waited long for his political moment, for what must have seemed to him like an eternity, and once he had achieved it he was not going to cut his moment short. Once there, he would leave his mark on school education policy. A short summary of his electoral victories will provide an understanding of his political opportunity.

Howard's political thrust

When provided with an opportunity on March 1996, Howard did not disappoint. He led his party in a landslide victory in the House. Now Labor was in disarray. At the October 1998 election, Labor's position improved but not enough to thwart the indomitable Howard, who was on his merry way with more joy to come in future elections. Labor was looking for leaders, but under Kim Beazley at the November 2001 election there was a swing against it. Where would the next Labor leader come from? At the October 2004 election with Mark Latham as Labor leader the Coalition

again increased its majority in the House of Representatives. When the new senators took their seats in July 2005 the government parties had a majority in the Senate for the first time since 1981 (NAAb, n.d., n.p.).

The Howard years were massive years for policy development and enactment in school education policy. Yet, it was working within a federal system with a strong predominance of Labor governments.

During the years of the Howard Government, Labor premiers or chief ministers controlled the state or territory governments by far the greater time. In fact, there were some years ‘wall-to-wall’ Labor premiers or chief ministers greeted Howard at COAG. Howard, however, had an ever-tightening grip on federal-state-territory relations through finance, and certainly supported by a sympathetic News Corporation media. Back in the departments of education in the various states and territories, policy-makers and curriculum professionals basically ‘did their own thing’ according to overarching government policy, albeit with an ever tightening of Commonwealth control, and an eye for education in the global market.

On 5 March 1997, the House of Representatives debated the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Bill 1996. It had been returned from the Senate requesting minor alterations. Tony Abbott, Liberal Member for Warringah, and at the time Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, and future Prime Minister, moved: ‘This legislation is an important part of quality assurance in a very important developing Australian industry’ (CofA, 1997, No. 212, 2041). Indeed, according to Abbott, ‘our export education industry is now, on some measures, bigger than the wheat industry. It is a \$1.9 billion a year industry. It attracts over 50,000 students every year to our country’ (CofA, 1997, No. 212, 2041). Indeed, education had become an industry. In Abbott’s words: ‘As one distinguished academic said to me graphically but inelegantly the other day, “Every overseas student on our campus is \$100,000 on the hoof for Australia” ’ (CofA, 1997, No. 212, 2041).

Within a decade this influx of full fee-paying international students would extend downwards from the tertiary sector to kindergartens. Under future Liberal and Labor governments, international students, once considered to be worth ‘\$100,000 on the hoof for Australia’ would become a stampede (CofA, 1997, No. 212, 2041).

Now, political leverage through the financial aspect of federalism would be vital. Howard, however, in 1999 pulled the GST out of his box of political tricks, further moving revenue raising to a user-pays and economic rationalist principles.

Zeitgeist: ‘he rode the wind of a political movement’

Howard extended the *zeitgeist* of economic rationalism in Australia which had taken root under Hawke and Keating. An editorial from *The Spectator* (2010) claimed ‘he rode the wind of a political movement that had begun with Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the US. He was ably supported by several impressive cabinet ministers, most notably Peter Costello, Alexander Downer and Philip Ruddock’ (*The Spectator*, 2010, n.p.). All of this occurred at a time when ‘Whitlamism and Keatingism were morally and intellectually spent’ (*The Spectator*, 2010, n.p.).

Howard (2010/2013) is brim full of accounts of how he was able to capture the *zeitgeist* of his age during his time in opposition and government. Errington and Van Onselen (2008, 52-53) pinpoint more precisely how Howard, while not ‘at the forefront of the development of the radical economic prescription that grew in popularity throughout the 1970s’, he was thereabouts. Indeed, for the two Howard apologists, ‘Howard was to become one of the first political leaders to advocate them’. The forces of globalization impacted heavily on the Howard Government.

Galligan and Wright (2002, 147) wrote of how: ‘Globalisation is the major challenge facing Australian governments in the twenty-first century. Indeed, ‘in the past, Australian federalism could be analysed with little reference to

the international stage because the Commonwealth was predominantly concerned with domestic affairs' (Galligan & Wright, 2002, 147). Now, however, 'with globalization forcing the nation to become more economically competitive and successive Commonwealth governments embarking upon programs of deregulation to expose local markets to global competition, a restrictive analysis of domestic developments of federalism is no longer possible' (Galligan & Wright, 2002, 147). With 'the deregulation of the Australian economy triggering the reshaping of intergovernmental relations and causing changes to domestic policy, political institutions and the nation's perceptions of itself within the region, globalization has touched all major aspects of Australian politics' (Galligan & Wright, 2002, 147). There were, however, other aspects of the *zeitgeist* of the Howard years.

A more critical analysis by Maddison (2011, 56) argued notions of race grew as a central ingredient of the *zeitgeist* dominating the Howard era. 'The so-called "history wars" became a battleground in the larger 'cultures wars' waged over the content of our national identity during the period of the Howard Government from 1996-2007. "Race" has been the big battleground of these culture wars'. Of course, this is not to contend the Howard Government precipitated this racism, but nevertheless for Maddison (2011) racism was a part of the *zeitgeist* of the Howard era.

PPS and 'piggy-backs' grow under the Howard Government

Clark (2006) showed in June 2004, Howard and his Minister for Education announced a \$31 million education package in which funding would be tied to a National Values Framework. The increased Commonwealth support was contingent upon the states and territories implementing several policy initiatives underpinning the Australian Government's national priorities, and shaping the nation's schools over the next decade. These were the so-called piggyback grants. Clark (2006, 162-3) showed these three requirements included a compulsory two hours of exercise for students every week, the adoption of a national safe schools framework, and the installation of a 'functioning flag pole'. The initiative was designed to support 'greater national consistency in schooling', such as a standard school starting age

and the promotion of educational standards. ‘Better reporting to parents’, ‘transparency of school performance’ and making values a core part of schooling’ framed the policy.

In respect to the SPPs, Welch (2014, 47) further showed:

In 2002-2003, some \$21.6 billion were in the form of SPPs, of a total of \$53 billion of Commonwealth transfers. Over \$7 billion was for education, and closer to \$8 billion for medical benefits. Such transfers have included conditions such as the following, which while selectively applied can be effective ways of enforcing national policy development(s):

- That states must expend the funds on the purpose for which they were designated.
- That states must match the Commonwealth grant, from their own treasuries.
- That state policies must conform to Commonwealth policies ...

Funds are dispersed via the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

While continuing to rail against such Commonwealth controls, state and territory premiers and chief ministers, and treasurers have used the system for their own political ends. According to Calligan (2001, 25), some have ‘learnt to manipulate the system in ways that help retain aspects of State power. To an extent the States collude in the ongoing fiscal arrangements that deliver them large grants of money for which they have no responsibility for collecting as taxes’. Indeed, ‘they reap the political benefits of spending money without attracting the odium of raising it, which makes a certain political sense even if it offends good public finance principles’ (Calligan, 2001, 25).

All in all, the evidence about the use and abuse of tied grants is mixed, and will be addressed again in the following chapter.

What was Howard’s supply-side federalism?

On the eve of the 24 November 2007 federal election the University of Western Australia’s (UWA) Institute of Advanced Studies invited the News

Corporation Sydney-based journalist, author and TV and radio commentator Paul Kelly, a long-time observer and supporter of Howard, to give an address on federalism and the Howard decade. Kelly had written books on political events in Australia since the 1970s including the 1975 Australian constitutional crisis.

Kelly (2008) observed Howard evinced ‘a nationalistic approach to federalism’ was driven by his ‘conviction that the Australian public is more national in outlook with State loyalties eroding and his decade-long discovery that people look to the national government for solutions’ (n.p.). Consequently, for Kelly’s (2008) analysis, this meant Menzies—Howard’s political hero—observations concerning centripetal and centrifugal forces would hold true: During the Howard years there was a definite move to centralise powers.

For Kelly (2008, n.p.), ‘Howard has abandoned the Liberal Party’s ritualistic genuflection before state powers’. Clearly, this would have troubled many traditional Australian conservatives, and certainly bewildered many Labor supporters, because this was playing federalism according to traditional Labor centralist rules.

Any political observer during the Howard decade could not have been but impressed by Howard’s expression of nationalism. For Kelly (2008, n.p.), ‘Howard is fascinated by the rise of national consciousness—in sport, economics, business and culture. Attending State of Origin Rugby League games, he refuses to barrack for New South Wales’. For Kelly (2008, n.p.), ‘on talkback radio across all states he finds that people want national solutions from the national government. His pragmatism as well as his nationalism drive this historic re-positioning’.

Howard’s expression of nationalism had various manifestations including what he considered was important knowledge for Australian students should learn at schools. If researchers are looking for an understanding underpinning Howard’s insistence on European-centric nationalist

interpretations, including his eulogy of the ANZAC tradition and negative views on the so-called Black armband approach to the interpretation of Australian history they may well begin here (see, e.g., Lake & Reynolds, 2010).

In respect to Kelly's (2008) first point regarding Howard's federalism, Kelly (2008) noted a drastic departure from his hero, Menzies, in respect Howard's views on political theory expressed at the right-wing Menzies Research Centre in Melbourne on the eve of the 2007 federal election. For Kelly (2008, n.p.), Howard certainly agreed with Menzies in the following respect: 'The global financial volatility of recent days simply underlines why steady, reliable, safe economic management is the bedrock of good government'. 'Economic management can never be put on autopilot. There is no room for complacency. And prosperity can never be taken for granted' (Kelly, 2008, n.p.). According to Kelly (2008, n.p.), Howard would have it: 'Fiscal conservatism is a long-term governing philosophy, not a label you pick off the shelf for short-term political purposes. And future-oriented government is about not just managing the good times, but also providing prudently for inevitable uncertainty and adversity'.

Yet, when Howard declared in the same speech his government seeks 'an appropriate balance' between the Commonwealth and states as 'an end in itself'. For Howard, the aim was to focus on outcomes and be 'neither centralists nor slavish adherents of states rights' (Howard, 2007, cited in Kelly, 2007). According to Kelly (2007, n.p.), 'this offended the conservative tradition that believed there was such an appropriate balance and its recognition was the essence of federalism'.

According to Kelly (2008), Howard's federalism was devoid of theory. It had pragmatism as its hallmark. Its only reference to political theory was there should be no theory. Yet, we need to remember federalism come at three levels—legal, political and financial. And it was the latter where the Howard decade is noteworthy. In 1 July 2000, the Howard Government introduced the GST, replacing the previous Federal wholesale sales tax

system and designed to phase out a number of various state and territory government taxes, duties and levies such as banking taxes and stamp duty. Kelly (2008) stated the GST, along with his revival of COAG, were essential ingredients to Howard's supply-side federalism.

For Kelly (2008, n.p.), however, 'the decision to earmark GST revenue for the states was not driven by any concept of federalism, but by the political need to neutralise state Labor opposition to Howard's tax reform package, a "make or break" issue for his government'.

Kelly (2008, n.p.) then reminded his audience at the UWA's Institute of Advanced Studies, and later his readers of a column he wrote in *The Australian* of 8 July 2006 of Howard's long-serving Treasurer—Peter Costello. Here, Kelly stated 'for years Costello has patronised the States, suggesting they were given a growth tax but failed to rise to the policy responsibility this involved. Indeed, 'in 2006 Costello damned the states comprehensively saying they were moving 'towards the role of service delivery more on the model of divisional offices than sovereign independent governments'.

According to Kelly (2008, n.p.), 'in fact, the GST has not proved a windfall for the States'. Indeed, 'the Commonwealth [was] the main revenue winner from the long economic expansion'. Thus, its federalist role was significantly strengthened.

Kelly (2008) returned to what we have noted as being another of the three strands of federalism, namely that of politics. The revival of COAG according to Kelly (2008, n.p.) 'was driven by the Victorian Government and its then premier, Steve Bracks and then Treasurer, John Brumby'. Kelly (2008, n.p.) argued through these negotiations and through a formal COAG agreement in 2007 the Howard Government pursued a series of so-called 'reforms' and a series of meetings between Howard and the Labor premiers 'best characterised as political "love-ins" '. For Kelly (2008, n.p.), these were 'underpinned by mutual recognition that the public hates buck-passing

and expects governments to work together'. By the 2007 federal election, these were 'consigned to cold storage', however, 'it exists in an uneasy tension with Howard's expansion of Commonwealth powers'.

Kelly (2008, n.p.) contended this Commonwealth expansion 'reached its zenith in Howard's fourth term in industrial relations policy and water policy'. These were genuine national issues, and according to Kelly (2008) embody 'the authentic nature of Australian federalism—that the problems of a modern society demand national solutions'. Upheld by the High Court, invoking corporation's power, Howard's Work Choices sought to establish a national industrial relations system replacing six separate state jurisdictions. Its future, however, under the Rudd Labor Government proved very short.

Marginson (2006, 5) signalled what he considered were continued weaknesses in the Howard Government's policy-making framework for his particular brand of federalism. He argued 'there is a framework for policy collaboration in schooling policy through MCEETYA, but the coverage of issues is incomplete and the machinery lacks clout. MCEETYA has not engaged in binding agreements'. In fact, 'it falls short of the *gravitas* of inter governmental financial negotiations of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Recent MCEETYA discussion has focused on the broad areas of curriculum provision though well short of common curricula, and the rhythms and protocols for standardised testing' (Marginson, 2006, 6).

Perhaps Marginson was underestimating COAG's clout, because increasingly under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments, then later the Abbott-Turnbull Governments, the Commonwealth would be able to exert increasing, albeit not absolute, leverage through Tied Grant and other similar measure on educational policy in the states and territories.

The triumph of private schooling: the Howard Government's involvement in school education

Not surprisingly, the Howard Coalition Government in 2000 had its own view on the history of Commonwealth involvement in education. The 2000-01 Annual DETYA Report reflected on the history of Commonwealth involvement in education (DETYA, Annual Report: 2000-01). The report contended this involvement began as a wartime imperative in certain faculties of Australian universities, but this research has demonstrated elsewhere, in fact, it began back in 1907 when the Deakin Government legislated to fund volunteer school cadet corps, a move promoting much vitriol in Australian society, especially amongst the Peace Society, (Rodwell, 1992a, 85).

The 2000-01 DETYA Report showed as distinct from university education, the Commonwealth's involvement in Australian school education evolved as a result of a more expansive interpretation of the Commonwealth under the constitution. Initially, this involvement was during the mid-1950s with funding of non-government schools in the form of a building loan interest scheme. Then, this was extended during the mid-1960s, and included government schools, with specific funding in support of infrastructures, including libraries and science facilities (DETYA, Annual Report: 2000-01, chap. 1).

In 2006, approaching Howard's defeat by Kevin Rudd at the 2007 election, Marginson (2006, 5) summarised primary and secondary schooling during the Howard years in respect to federal-state-territory relations. Devoid of any 'agreed demarcation of function in relation to funding of schools ... driven by electoral politics at both state and federal levels, in relation to both public and private schooling and especially the latter', the Howard years imposed a distinct right-wing ideology through its particular brand of supply-side federalism on Australia's schools. It was a central ethos of conservative politics governments would have a reduced role in national school education. The cost would be borne through the private sector. This was moving the public debt to a private debt. Marginson (2006, n.p.) went

on to affirm the level of the Howard Government's commitment to private schools. 'The federal government has played the key role in the material development of private schooling, which now educates just over 30 per cent of all school students, up from the historical low point 20 per cent in the late 1970s'.

Marginson (2006, n.p.) explained the federal government provided more than half the dollars received by private schools from all sources. 'About 65 per cent of all federal money for schools goes to private schools, including the Catholic systems in each state and territory, up from 58 per cent when the Howard Government took office in 1996'. This represented a massive shift in financial assistance to private schooling, far outstripping the ambitions of the Fraser Government. Marginson (2006, n.p.) concluded, 'given the federal government's greater fiscal power, the split of primary funding responsibilities between federally funded private schools and state funded public schools has pre-structured parental choice so as to destabilise the public systems over time'.

Investing in our schools

During the last days of the Howard Government, with Julie Bishop Minister for Education, the Howard Government broke new grounds with federalism and school education. 'The Investing In Our Schools Program (IOSP) is an Australian Government initiative to provide funding directly to schools to undertake locally assessed high priority work on their sites in accordance with established criteria and the application process' (Aust Gov. IOSP, n.d.).

In line with what Abbott (2009, 133-134) had written about what was perceived to be unwarranted educational bureaucracies, according to him, 'the Howard Government sought to empower local schools and their communities by paying substantial infrastructure grants directly to them—rather than through state educational bureaucracies'. In a first for the Commonwealth, typically, utilising local co-contributions these grants were for such infrastructure as school libraries, music rooms and assembly halls.

With IOSP's beneficiary's being private schools, the incoming Labor Government axed the policy.

Stamping out the scourge of perceived left-wing curriculum ideologies: the Feds fight back against OBEs and ELs

Davies (2007, n.p.) claimed 'in the last three years education has been the theatre for a political conflict that was as much cultural as financial, as the Commonwealth sought to influence political debate about its own preferences for school curriculum, school governance and school "values" '. Fuelled by advice from advisors such as Kevin Donnelly who in 2004 was chief-of-staff to Liberal Party Minister Kevin Andrews. As the Introduction to this research explained, in 2013, the Abbott-Turnbull Government's Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne would appoint Kevin Donnelly as a member of the two-person panel to review the ACARA Curriculum.

According to Davies (2007, n.p.) the improvement of standards in schooling was a philosophical argument 'the Commonwealth thought it could win, sensing state government weakness and public disaffection at the state of State schools'. With their Outcome-based Education (OBE) and Essential Learnings (ELs) respectively in Western Australia and Tasmania, public school education especially was 'on the nose'.

In 2004, Davies (2007) stated 'the Commonwealth began its new program of assertiveness by first tying school funding to "plain English" school reports. Minister Nelson and Howard issued *The Australian Government's Agenda for Schools: achievement through choice and opportunity, Joint statement by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education ...*

In a revealing interview on the ABC *Insiders* program headed 'national curriculum push criticism "misguided" ', hosted by Barrie Cassidy, of 8 October 2006, the new Howard Government Minister for Education, Julie Bishop stated 'we can't be complacent when our universities are introducing remedial English classes for tertiary students and when we have debacles like the introduction of an outcomes based education system in Western

Australia that lasted for several months’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p. cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 26-27). The Tasmanian ELs curriculum was a problem for Bishop as well. It was a failed experiment, and it has now been trashed. Likewise in Tasmania, where they introduced an essential learning curriculum, decided it didn’t work and junked it. ‘Now who suffers?’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p. cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 26-27). Indeed, ‘the students, the teachers and the taxpayer, and that is why parents and teachers are turning to the Commonwealth for leadership in this area’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p. cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 27). Bishop despaired: ‘In the last funding round the Australian Government provided \$33 billion to States and Territories to run their schools, and I believe that the Australian taxpayers would expect us to make the States and Territories accountable for that investment’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p. cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 27).

This, however, was not simply about accountability or ‘improved’ curricula. Cassidy put to Bishop, ‘you talk about a national board coming from the ‘sensible centre’. Now there is a value judgment for somebody to make, if ever there was one’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p., cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 27-28).

Bishop responded with real political intent on the Howard Government’s curriculum push: ‘Well, parents are sick of left wing ideology in curriculum just as I would suggest you don’t need right wing ideology’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p., cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 28). She stated ‘let’s have a sensible centre in education and ensure our students have a common sense of curriculum with core subjects, including Australian history and a renewed focus on literacy and numeracy’ (Cassidy, 2006, n.p., cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 28).

The increased Commonwealth support was contingent upon the states implementing several policy initiatives underpinning the Australian Government’s national priorities, and shaping the nation’s schools over the next decade. Clark (2006, 162-3) showed these three requirements included a compulsory two hours of physical exercise for students every week, the adoption of a national safe schools framework, and the installation of a ‘functioning flag pole’. The initiative was designed to support: ‘Greater

national consistency in schooling’, such as a standard school starting age and the promotion of educational standards. ‘Better reporting to parents’, ‘transparency of school performance’ and making values a core part of schooling’ framed the policy. Of course, the critical question in all of this is ‘whose values’? Clark (2006) showed the intended values to be implemented in the nation’s schools were those of the ruling political elite.

Davies (2007, n.p.) reckoned, understandably the Commonwealth thought it was on a winner in this area. The existence of OBE-based school curricula, and ‘school reports written in mumbo jumbo, is reminiscent of the joke in *Yes Minister* about the adoption of ‘comprehensive’ education in the UK. Bernard Woolley explained to the Minister who actually wanted it—not the students, not the parents, only the teachers’ unions’.

Citing a 2005 article in the *SMH* (Thompson, 2005), Davies (2007, n.p.) argued all Australian states seemed to be suffering from a similar malaise: ‘The same is probably true of the origins of similar curricula in Australia, but nonetheless every State had, to some degree, adopted such measures’. Indeed, for Davies (2007, n.p.), ‘even NSW Premier Morris Iemma was driven to public despair at the unintelligible nature of his children’s school reports, which probably prompted even greater despair amongst other State school parents that it took him ten years in government to notice. In terms of the political contest with the Commonwealth, this was effectively a pre-emptive surrender by NSW’. Despite their ideological commitments, soon the states and territories folded to the will of the Commonwealth—some might say to the pressures of commonsense (Rodwell, 2009a; Alderson & Martin, 2007; Berlach & McNaught, 2007; Berlach & O’Neill, 2008).

When Davies (2007) cited Bernard Woolley from *Yes Minister* as to what groups actually were supporting these perceived left-wing educational ideologies, given, for example, the widespread opposition to ELs amongst Tasmanian state school teachers, he may well have looked elsewhere for evidence. Still, the points he makes about the Howard Government’s impact on Australian school education hold true.

National Values Framework

Clark (2006) showed how in ‘June 2004 the Prime Minister, John Howard, and federal Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, announced a new \$31 billion education package in which funding would be tied to a National Values Framework’ (Clark, 2006, 162, cited in Rodwell, 2009a, 26-27).

The National Framework: Nine Values for Australian Schooling website showed how ‘Nine Values for Australian Schooling were identified for the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. They emerged from Australian school communities and the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century’ (The National Framework, n.d.). These nine values reflected what are generally regarded as traditional Australian values: respect and “fair go” are part of Australia’s common democratic way of life, which includes equality, freedom and the rule of law. They reflect our commitment to a multicultural and environmentally sustainable society where all are entitled to justice’ (The National Framework, n.d.). It was left to individual schools and colleges to implement these shared values in ways best suiting the school community.

The detail of the National Framework need not bother us any further. Of pertinence, however, are the political motives underpinning it. Of course, this was an instance of the Commonwealth attempting to control curricula with states and territories. This invites a comparison with the ‘softly, softly’ approach employed by the CDC during the coordinative federalism of the Whitlam-Fraser epoch.

History Summit: ‘root and branch renewal’ and bringing SOSE and HSIE to an end

Australia Day 2006—January 26—was memorable for reasons other than ‘celebrating’ two hundred and eighteen years of Europeans in Australia. In the words of Michelle Grattan from *The Age* ‘in an Australia Day eve address to the National Press Club, Mr Howard exhorted a “coalition of the willing” to promote changes to the teaching of history, which he said was

neglected in schools and too often questioned or repudiated the nation's achievements'. Howard promoted his ideas on the Cronulla Race Riots of December 2005 (Grattan, 2006, n.p.).

The fault was in our schools where political correctness and 'Black Armband' ideas had wreaked ruin on Australia's national identity. In his address Howard called for 'root and branch renewal' of history teaching in schools—increasing the number of students who studied it and overhauling the way it was taught (Grattan, 2006, n.p.). According to Howard, as reported by Grattan (2006, n.p.), 'fewer than a quarter of senior secondary students took a history subject, and only a fraction of this study was Australian history'. Indeed, for Howard ' "Too often, it is taught without any sense of structured narrative, replaced by a fragmented stew of "themes" and "issues" ... and too often, history, along with other subjects in the humanities, has succumbed to a postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record of achievement is questioned or repudiated' (Grattan, 2006, n.p.). The teaching of History, for Howard had a national purpose, 'part of preparing young Australians to be informed and active citizens is to teach them the central currents of our nation's development' (Grattan, 2006, n.p.). Consequently, Howard called for a History Summit.

Minister for Education Julia Bishop obliged. Two weeks, however, before Bishop's History Summit, in July 2006, Ann Curthoys addressed the Professional Historians Association in Sydney on the vexed topic of History in the Howard era. When Howard speaks of 'heroic achievement', the central question would be whose 'heroic achievements'—whose history? This has prompted Curthoys (2006) to ask: 'Why has Howard talked so consistently of balance in history? Why does history matter to him and to the government he heads? What does he really mean?' (Curthoys, 2006, 1).

In her analysis of these questions, Curthoys (2006) takes us back to the so-called 'History Wars' of the late 1980s and 1990s, where Howard had expressed his support for conservative, Whiggish, evolutionary idealist interpretations of Australian history. Curthoys (2006) has explored

Howard's views, showing how McKenna (1998) and Brawley (1997) demonstrated how the political issues involved here sharpened during the Keating years (1991-96), when Keating accused the Opposition of being 'relics from the past, remaining British to their bootstraps despite Britain's decision not to help Australia defend itself against the Japanese advance in 1942'. The Liberal and National parties, he [Keating] said, 'are the same old fogies who doffed their lids and tugged the forelock to the British establishment' (Brawley, as cited in Curthoys (2006, 2).

Curthoys contended the debate further intensified when the Coalition lost the 'unlosable election' in 1993. Keating had succeeded in positioning Labor as the champions of 'what was truly Australian' (Curthoys, 2006, 3). Then came Howard's 2006 Australia Day speech.

Bishop threw her support behind her leader, saying she 'would like to see Australian students develop the sense of pride in learning about their nation's history that American students did. She said few students are learning about Australian history, as history has fallen victim to a crowded curriculum. 'Currently', she said, ' "it tends to be in themes, it tends to be fragmented, the narrative of Australian history is so important" ' (PM's history speech, 2006, cited in Curthoys, 2006, 4).

Curthoys (2006) interpreted Bishop to mean a thematic treatment of history in the manner in which many historians write their history. However, what in fact Bishop was referring to—or perhaps, what her advisers had told her—was the manner in which historical topics were dealt with in SOSE and HSIE classroom: in an integrative and thematic manner. In a critical moment in the history of the teaching of History in Australian schools, the curriculum now took a sharp turn to a discipline approach, away from an integrated approach with its own pedagogy dating back to at least John Dewey's project method of the 1920s.

On 5 July 2006, in establishing the agenda for the History Summit, Bishop delivered a major statement on the teaching of History 'repeating her earlier

point about the crowded curriculum, and specifically advocating a return to the teaching of history as a stand-alone course' (Curthoys, 2006, 3). History would be taught as a distinct discipline instead of SOSE or HSIE. She went on to echo Howard's statements concerning a heroic narrative of Australian, rich in dates and facts. The History Summit would take place on 17 August 2006.

For Curthoys (2006), however, there were some troubling aspects to Bishop's announcement. She saw Bishop's responses as a 'as a delayed response to the Report of the National Inquiry into School History, presented to the government in 2000, commissioned by ... DETYA in September 1999 and written by Tony Taylor and others' (Curthoys, 2006, 4). This report, Curthoys (2006) explained, 'made several recommendations, including the holding a national seminar on history in schools, much like the history summit that is now proposed' (Taylor, 2000, as cited in Curthoys, 2006, 4). Moreover, 'it also drew attention to the need to upgrade the role of history in schools, give it a stronger focus, allow for more in depth study, and direct resources to teacher training and professional and curriculum development accordingly' (Taylor, 2000, as cited in Curthoys, 2006, 4). The report also recommended the establishment of a National Centre for History Education; this was done and Taylor appointed its director.

For Curthoys (2006, 5), 'all this is very welcome, if delayed. On the more worrying side, there is more than a hint that the Federal government will attempt to influence what kind of history is taught, and that it will a form of history which will be nationalistic and simplistic'. The seeds were thus sown for direct involvement of the Commonwealth in the content of an Australian-wide, mandatory History curriculum (Australian History Summit, n.d.).

Topsfield (2007, n.p.) from *The Age* reported 'Mr Howard will use today's announcement to launch an attack on the states over the standards of schools'. So anxious was Howard to use Commonwealth powers to correct perceived wrongs of the past, according to Taylor (2008) when a draft of the

new national History curriculum was returned from Canberra, it had what Taylor considered to be Howard's very own hand-written annotations.

National report cards

In the nationwide ABC *Insiders* program cited above, Cassidy (2006) had rhetorically asked: 'John Howard and his handpicked bureaucracy will decide what is taught in our schools?' A part of this leverage was the issue of federal Education Minister, Brendan Nelson's 'plain English' report cards. Cash-strapped state and territory governments were in no position to decline the offer. For example, the Tasmanian government needed the millions of Commonwealth dollars tied to the issue of the Federal-inspired report cards. The result was that year Tasmanian state school teachers would be required to write two sets of report cards for their pupils: The plain English report cards with their A-E ratings, and the ELs report cards. Tasmanian Minister for Education, Paula Wriedt, conceded to Paine from *The Mercury* a Commonwealth victory on this matter (Paine, 2006).

The Tasmanian primary principals and assistant principals came out in opposition to this blatant leverage. Martain from *The Mercury* reported 'at a meeting of the Australian Education Union's Principals and Assistant Principals Consultative Committee in Launceston last week, the group labelled the A-E report cards a failure' (Martain, 2006, n.p.). Martain (2006, n.p.) reported: 'Committee chair Terry Polglase called on Tasmania's new Education Minister to immediately renegotiate the conditions linking the A-E reports to State Government funding. The profession condemns (the A-E report's) introduction as no child should be labelled, ranked or graded across schools'.

Testifying to the strength of the Commonwealth leverage on the states, at the time of the writing of this research, Tasmanian students were taking home A-E report cards, as were all Australian school students.

Preparing Australian students for the risk society: the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA)

While ACSA has had a reputation for being a sensible organisation, whether or not it could hold a majority opinion as belonging to the ‘sensible centre’ that we have noted Bishop was looking for is debatable, and open to opinion. It appears, however, Bishop’s office had approached the organisation in order to take the initial steps in establishing the public discourse necessary for the establishment of a national curriculum.

ACSA convened the Curriculum Standing Committee of National Education Professional Associations (CSCNEPA), which first met in February 2007. CSCNEPA served to encourage a full, rigorous and wide-ranging dialogue around the development and implementation of a twenty-first century curriculum for Australian schools. The membership of CSCNEPA was made up of the Chairs and Directors of fourteen national professional associations. In May 2007, CSCNEPA developed a statement on what a 21st century curriculum must achieve for all Australian students and how it can be achieved. At the ACSA Biennial Conference in July 2007, an exposure draft was tested during a panel session with input from participants. As a result of this input and the work undertaken by CSCNEPA, a working paper, *Developing a Twenty-first Century School Curriculum for All Australian Students* was developed (ACSA, n.d.).

The CSCNEPA membership comprised Chairs and Directors of the fourteen major curriculum and professional associations, such as the Australian Curriculum Studies Association and the Australian Primary Principals Association noted in ACSA (n.d., 2). Significantly, globalism and the risk society featured heavily in the criteria upon which the CSCNEPA activities were developed (ACSA, n.d., 4).

The CSCNEPA curriculum position statement development in 2007 leaves no doubt globalism and risk society were impacting very strongly on the motives for the Commonwealth leverage on school education generally, and specifically the development of the national curriculum. Sounding suggestions it considered future Commonwealth involvement in school education should take, CSCNEPA outlined what it considered to be the

purposes of a twenty-first century curriculum, and mostly this was about managing school education in a global society, and managing the same in a risk society (ACSA, n.d., 5). From these statements it is clear the concerns of the Howard Government stemming from the Cronulla Race Riots of December 2005, the looming presence of terrorism in Australia, and the general issues associated with the risk society had brought the CSCNEPA in 2007 to recommend far-reaching involvement by the Commonwealth in school education. Would these ideals survive the looming federal election of 24 November 2007?

Analysis and conclusions

A social conflict analysis shows, buoyed by considerable political punch, the eleven years of the Howard Government asserted powerful centripetal forces on federalism and school education. With a high level of political credit, for Howard these were years of much political opportunity. Non-government, private schools prospered. During these years there was also a consolidation of the influences of globalism and economic rationalism. Now, these influences on Australian school education were accepted as givens. Educational policy makers continually had an eye on such international benchmarks as PISA scores, pushing them to the attention of politicians.

While so-called ‘reforms’ introduced from 2007 by the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government (2007-2013) were intended to usher in a new era of ‘cooperative federalism’, one contemporary analyst characterized tied grants as a ‘fragile and uncertain policy-making instrument, consistently open to political opportunism, ideological fluctuation and policy and implementation resistance from the states and local stakeholders’ (Ramamurthy, 2013, 117, as cited in Welch, 2014, 47). The same author acknowledged their role in ‘assisting states to overcome local resistance to controversial policy reforms such as greater (school) principal autonomy, and performance pay (for teachers)’ (Ramamurthy, 2012, 128, as cited in Welch, 2014, 47).

Moreover, politicians' own ideological views began to impact on school education. For example, Commonwealth leverage on the school curriculum also increased, even to the extent of pushing for not only what should be taught in the (um, but also how it should be taught—its pedagogy. The Howard epoch signalled it sought an end of the integrated SOSE or HSIE curriculum, and flagged the re-entry of the discipline-based History curriculum. However, that would occur only with the advent of the ACARA national curriculum under the incoming Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments. This illustrates that despite the oftentimes political advantages at a federal level, the Commonwealth needed to negotiate with the states and territories for changes to school education. Again, we need to remind ourselves there are three aspects to federalism: legal, financial and political. With many of the states, particularly the larger states under the control of Labor governments, Howard's Coalition Government certainly did not always have its own way (Rodwell, 2017a).

The epoch of the Howard Government illustrates how Kingdon's (2003) agenda-setting is linked to the dominant *zeitgeist* of the time as well as the political reality. The imperatives generated by globalism and economic rationalism enhanced the likelihood of school educational decision-making increasingly being moved to the federal arena. Many would argue states and territories, while necessarily delivering school education, needed to be coordinated and directed for the national good in respect to policy, hence the vital importance of COAG as a forum for negotiations.

CHAPTER TEN

Enter ‘Risk Society’: National Control and the Rudd, Gillard, Abbott, Turnbull Years (2007-2015)

Introduction

There are some interesting parallels between the short-term Whitlam Government and the short-term Rudd Government. Both had to struggle with drastic international economic conditions—Whitlam with rampant inflation, spiralling oil prices and falling beef prices. Although, the Rudd Government was not blamed so savagely and erroneously by the News Corporation media in the manner of the Whitlam Government for these conditions, it became a target for some of the media with the effects of the rushed economic measures—the bank holidays and school buildings (BER) and the DER—which the government put in place. Yet, the Rudd Government achieved much, as did the Gillard Government and the subsequent second Rudd Government in respect to expanded contribution to school education. But as with the Whitlam Government, during the Rudd, Gillard, Abbott, Turnbull years (2007-2015), Australian society was undergoing rapid change.

Perhaps by its own mismanagement through a forced change in prime minister, compelled into a minority government with the Greens, the Gillard and second-term Rudd governments struggled with a perception of political incompetence and rushed decision-making. Increasingly, commentators are assessing the direction of blame for Rudd’s performance. By any standards, the Gillard years, and the subsequent second Rudd years were made

unnecessarily difficult by botched opportunities during the first Rudd Government.

As with education policy in the transition from Whitlam to Fraser, with its swing in funding towards private schooling, there were parallels in the transition from the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments to the Abbott Coalition Government. There was a parallel swing to emphasising private school funding. Certainly, Abbott worked hard in refocussing federalism away from the centre under his government. While all of this was happening, Australian society increasingly was coming under the influence of the risk society. It was as if Australian society was ‘on the edge’. With the election of the Abbott LNP Coalition, many Australians looked forward to a more stable political environment. But would the presence of risk society allow for this?

Risk society politics in Australia

In the shadows of the September 2013 election one conservative political observer wrote in the News Corporation media, claiming ‘the upshot ... is that Mr Abbott did the very thing so many U.S. Republicans and British Tories have shied away from in recent years: He had the courage to broaden the appeal of a conservative agenda rather than copy the policies of his opponents’ (Switzer, n.p.). Indeed, for Switzer (2013, n.p.), ‘as a result, Australians enjoyed a real choice at the polls this weekend. Mr Abbott’s resounding victory showed that they relished this opportunity to chart a more free-market course’.

News Corporation’s Switzer (2013, n.p.) continued: ‘Like Margaret Thatcher’s victory in the UK Conservative party leadership ballot and Ronald Reagan’s nomination as the Republican presidential candidate in 1980, this delighted the left. They considered him too divisive and—gasp!—too conservative to be electable’. Switzer (2013, n.p.) enthused how Abbott ‘opposed Canberra’s big-spending and interventionist agenda, which had turned a \$20 billion surplus under the previous conservative government to skyrocketing debt and deficits; while he supported tough border protection,

which had traditionally helped boost public confidence in large-scale and legal immigration’. According to Switzer (2013, n.p.), ‘by refusing to buckle in his opposition to Labor’s increasingly anti-business agenda, he set the scene for his electoral success at the weekend’.

During 2015, particularly following the May budget, the prolonged loss of political support for the ultra-conservative Abbott Government challenges the hypothesis Australian voters had moved to the right at the September 2013 election. Moreover, there had been repeated Labor victories in the South Australian, Victorian and Queensland state polls. Indeed, with Abbott and his Government languishing in the opinion polls—eighteen consecutive months of a poor second to Bill Shorten’s Labor—on the night of 14 September 2015, Abbott lost the Liberal leadership to the moderate Malcolm Turnbull on a party room leadership spill motion. Apparently, in order to secure the necessary numbers the Turnbull camp needed to horse-trade on policy with the right-wing conservatives. Later, Turnbull had to do policy deals, including those with its Coalition partner, the National Party (Smith, 2015). All this included deals in areas such as marriage equality, climate change and the environment. The Nationals returned to controlling the nation’s precious water policy of the Murray Basin. Would there be similar deals with the nation’s school education policies? (Peatling, 2015). With Education Minister Pyne now firmly in Turnbull’s camp, just how much the Turnbull-led moderate faction could assert its influence on existing school education policy was not clear at the time of writing and preparation of this research for examination.

By the beginning of 2015, there is little to suggest any significant changes in the Australian *zeitgeist* than that existing during the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd years. In fact, increasingly, Australians were considering whether or not the Abbott victory in September 2013 was more about voters rejecting the dysfunctional Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments than it was about moving towards a conservative *zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist: economic rationalism and globalisation

Separating the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd and Abbott-Turnbull years from the Howard years was the more obvious influence of risk society, about which more will be included later in this chapter.

Perhaps, as one would expect the *zeitgeist* of the Howard years carried through to the nine years of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd and the Abbott-Turnbull Government. Economic rationalism and globalism were at every turn. Increasingly, as with Australia's commodity exports, education became a major export commodity. In an internationally competitive market, the nation's PISA scores now assume enormous importance. For example, in May 2015 when Pyne called for compulsory mathematics and science for all Years 11 and 12 students, Australia's lagging PISA scores were used to advance the argument (Cook, 2015). Pyne's call was a response to Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten, call to promote his own science and maths plan including free access to certain university degrees and the introduction of computer coding in primary and secondary schools (Cook, 2015).

Indeed, with growing pressures from a global economy, and perhaps from the threatening presence of the risk society, Pyne called for a review of standards of teacher preparation (Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, n.d.) and the Abbott-Turnbull Governments through the ARC funded projects, such as *Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education, Final Report* (2015, 21). The latter report stated: 'Teacher education is, and has been for some time, a highly scrutinized domain in Australia. In the last decade alone there have been no fewer than forty reports on various aspects of teacher education ...'. Referring to the importance of the research by Bates (2005), it continued, 'teacher education attracts this attention because it is often positioned as a mechanism for achieving pressing or urgent political agendas', signalled by such global data as that from PISA. 'In this way, teacher education has increasingly been positioned as a "policy problem" (*Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education*, 2015, 21).

School education as an export commodity

China has become Australia's largest trading partner, with total trade—goods and services—in 2009 valued at A\$85.1 billion, an increase of 15.1 per cent over the previous year' (Australian Embassy, China, n.d.). According to the Australia Embassy, China, 'the Australian and Chinese economies are strongly complementary', resulting in trade and investment relationship being substantially developed well beyond its modest beginnings in the 1970s. Now, 'two-way merchandise trade has grown from A\$113 million in 1973, just after the establishment of diplomatic relations, to A\$78.2 billion in 2009 (Australian Embassy, China, n.d.).

Education assumed an increasing importance in this trade relationship. Australia's services exports to China, 'valued at A\$5.5 billion in 2009, are dominated by educational and recreational travel and have averaged annual growth of 18 per cent over the past five years ... China remains Australia's largest source of overseas students, with around 155,000 enrolments in Australian educational institutions in 2009' (Australian Embassy, China, n.d.). In Australia, Schools such as the Glenunga International High School (GIHS), South Australia's highest performing government school, with its IB curriculum attracts an international clientele (GIHS, n.d.). The IB, in particular, has maintained its role as an Australian export commodity, bringing in massive overseas revenue. Of course, in various ways this is repeated across all of Australia's educational jurisdictions.

Continuing internationalising of the Australian school education market

The extent of the continuing influence of globalisation on Australian schools and colleges became very obvious during the early years of the twenty-first century. Included in this is the growing number of research articles devoted to IB in Australia. IB has become a commodity aimed at a discrete school education market. For example, a drive down Portrush Road in Adelaide's eastern suburbs during December 2014 showed a Catholic girls' private college advertising its success in gaining IB approval.

Research on the effect of globalisation on Australian school education and its implications for teachers, for example, showed: ‘Globalisation has opened up new markets of educational products (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment), and new markets in students and for teachers ... Australian schools are increasingly considered a way for international students to access universities’ (Arber & Blackmore, 2010, 2). Indeed, according to Arber and Blackmore (2010, 2), ‘teachers with English language skills are in high demand in overseas international schools ... This has significant implications for the organization of schooling, curriculum and pedagogy in Victoria, and for teacher career paths and professional identities’.

Some teachers report teaching in these schools is not always easy. Anne (pseudonym) (2014), a high-achieving music teacher from a mixed-gender Adelaide Catholic school featuring IB with a strong focus on enrolling fee-paying international students reported how difficult it was sometimes working within this entrepreneurial setting. For Anne (2014), this was especially so at times of unscheduled parent tours as senior staff escorted potential ‘customers’ through the school inspecting the music program. ‘I’m absolutely motivated by the program, but I must admit I often feel like a performing monkey at a sideshow’, she declared. This concurs with teacher responses uncovered by Arber and Blackmore (2010, 11): ‘While some teachers perceived inherent value in developing new skills as they worked with international students, other teachers viewed them as yet another competing demand in an already overstretched curriculum and work program’.

Turnbull’s assuming the prime ministership on 21 September 2015 marked a significant development in the Commonwealth’s role in international education. Senator Richard Colbeck from Tasmania was appointed Minister for Tourism and International Education and Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment, the first such appointment, and one which marked considerable development since the 1960s when state minister of education pleaded with the Commonwealth for some assistance in the area of international fee-paying students. Taking on the newly created

role of Minister for Tourism and International Education, a ministry outside Cabinet, Colbeck declared: ‘International education was one of Australia’s largest and most important export industries—worth \$18 billion in 2014-2015—and the opportunity to promote this industry and play a part in its growth was one that he relished’ (BYTE, n.d.).

Rudd, Gillard and Abbott: the political dynamics

Earlier, the Rudd Government enjoyed strong support in the opinion polls. While, over and above the GFC, the issues of climate change and asylum seekers were gaining traction during the years 2007-2009, perhaps indicating the pressures of the risk society on national governments. Now, Rudd’s managerial style was to cause his downfall. Evans (2010) wrote; ‘most assessments of Kevin Rudd’s demise as the twenty-sixth Prime Minister of Australia after two years and 204 days in power have tended to focus on the role of his ‘troublesome’ personality in undermining his power base and ultimately his legacy (261, cited in Holmes & Fernandes, 9).

Holmes and Fernandes (2011) argued Rudd himself was his worst political enemy: ‘ “Dozens of employees have resigned from senior Government and Opposition offices in the past two years”. Dubbing him “Kevin 24/7”, and portraying him as an excessively demanding manager and with an aggressive approach, newspapers reported allegations of fiery conflict between the Prime Minister and his staff’ (Evans, 2010, p. 269, cited in Holmes & Fernandes, 2011, 9). There was worse still for Rudd, according to Evans (2010) who quoted ‘a senior public servant as saying: ‘Before too long it became evident that the only time we were able to really move things on was when the Prime Minister was out of the country and Julia was in charge’ (Evans, 2010, 269, cited in Holmes & Fernandes, 2011, 9).

Consequently, blind to the reality of how much Australians did not support this kind of parliamentary process and politics at a national election, Rudd was displaced as Prime Minister in a Caucus vote and his Deputy Leader and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, was installed as Prime Minister on 24 June 2010, with an election looming on 21 August 2010.

It was a close election. Four crossbench MPs, Greens, Adam Bandt, and independents Andrew Wilkie, Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor declared their support for Labor on confidence and supply, allowing Gillard and Labor to remain in power with a 76-74 minority government. The government had Green support in the Senate. Thus, began a term of government marked by leaks, and a series of leadership challenges by Rudd. With opinion polls in a downward spiral, Caucus returned Rudd as Prime Minister on 27 June 2013 to salvage what was possible before the 18 September 2013 election (Rodgers, 2010a).

Former Education Minister and Gillard supporter, Peter Garrett, resigned from Cabinet following the return of Rudd to the prime ministership, having promised prior to successive ballots he could not serve under Rudd. Bill Shorten switched his support from Gillard to Rudd in the 2013 leadership spill and was appointed as the new Education Minister, while retaining his Workplace Relations portfolio. Yet, as with the CDC legislation in the last days of the Whitlam Government, the second Rudd Government managed to have the Gonski education funding legislation passed, and successful negotiations with the states and territories. The Rudd Government enacted the \$15.2 billion Better Schools Plan in July 2013 (Griffiths, 2013).

Abbott won the September 2013 federal election with a seventeen-seat, 3.6 per cent two-party swing. The Coalition was back. How could it consolidate its gains? A turning point in their fortunes was the May 2014 federal budget, condemned by many commentators as unnecessarily harsh.

When the Queensland ALP was returned in a dramatic win at the 31 February 2015 state elections, Chris Uhlmann (2015a, n.p.) from *ABC News*, reported: 'The rout of the Liberal National Party in the Queensland election is being described as "catastrophic" by federal Coalition MPs, with some claiming the Prime Minister is now terminally wounded'. The ALP won the election with a 10.9 per cent swing, moving from nine seats in Opposition out of a total of 89 to gaining government.

The tide did not turn for Abbott until a much more moderate 2015 budget in May. Now, they might be in a political position to flag some education policies. Pyne's 26 May 2015 flagging of the need for compulsory science and mathematics education for all students from K-12 was one such example (Cook, 2015).

The politics of a difficult Senate

Clive Palmer and the Palmer United Party (PUP) deserve our attention here. The news about PUP and Clive Palmer dominated Australian politics during the first term of the Abbott-Turnbull Governments, particularly following the defection of the Tasmanian senator, Jacqui Lambie, in late November 2014, and her declaration she would vote against all government legislation until and unless it revises its Defence Force pay deal will make life difficult.

In an *Inside Story* article, Peter Brent (2014, n.p.) claimed 'even assuming she [Lambie] doesn't spend the next five and a half years rejecting everything, she'll be one more cat needing to be herded. Getting the PUP on board will no longer bring her guaranteed support'. Brent (2014) noted, 'the numbers in the seventy-six-strong Senate for the 2014-17 term are: thirty-three Coalition, twenty-five Labor, ten Greens and eight others' (n.p.). It was the 'eight others' making life interesting for the Abbott-Turnbull Governments. Thus, the states and territories were well protected in the Senate, and Pyne and Abbott's task of negotiating with them in matters concerning school education were made even harder.

With Abbott drowning in the depths of low opinion polls during most of 2014, he was being spoken of as 'One-Term Tony'. Writing in *The Western Australian*, Wright (2014, n.p.) wrote: Tony Abbott believes Australians are not ready to 'surrender' back to the ALP despite polls showing the Federal Government is in danger of being a one-term administration'. Moreover, 'the Prime Minister urged crossbench senators to look at 'the big picture' rather than block small measures that ultimately hit the Budget bottom line' (Wright, 2014, n.p.). Soon to prove fatal, 'a series of opinion polls points to

a collapse in coalition primary support as well as a fall in Mr Abbott's personal approval rating' (Wright, 2014, n.p.).

The second half of Abbott's term in office thus became an exercise in winning back the middle ground of Australia's voting public. This was hardly a time for adventures into school education policy without the full approval of the states and territories.

Abbott's federalism: states become territories: 'mere service deliverers'?

In *Battleline* Abbott (2009, 133) declared 'most Australians instinctively support health and education reform because they sense that the highly bureaucratic structures are unresponsive to people's needs'. He called for smaller state and territory educational bureaucracies and a greater role for private schooling. Moreover, he outlined other sound political reasons for this: Larger educational bureaucracies meant larger unions, and increased support for Labor.

How would this work out with Abbott as Prime Minister? In late October 2014, Abbott was in Tenterfield in the New South Wales New England Tablelands to announce some detail of his Government's path to a new federalism. The News Corporation media reported 'Prime Minister Tony Abbott wants a bipartisan approach to changes to the way the state and federal governments co-operate' ('Abbott seeks bipartisan ...', 2014, n.p.). According to *The Australian*, 'Mr Abbott will use the speech to unveil an eminent person's group comprising former South Australian Labor premier John Bannon, former Victorian Liberal treasurer Alan Stockdale and high-profile figures Greg Craven, Jennifer Westacott, Cheryl Edwards and Doug McTaggart' ('Abbott seeks bipartisan ... 2014, n.p.). Thus, 'the prime minister will meet premiers in mid-2015—after the Victorian, Queensland and NSW state elections—to discuss the way forward' ('Abbott seeks bipartisan ... 2014, n.p.).

Thoughtful Australians waited anxiously for the tabling of Abbott's green paper in the second half of 2015 followed by a white paper in the run-up to the 2016 federal election. An example of this was in July 2014, the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) held a public forum on reform of the Australian federation, which continued the CIS's involvement in issues related to Australian federalism over many years. It was held at this time in response to Abbott's announcement of a review leading to a White Paper on Reform of the Federation. Contributing to the forum was Nick Greiner, one-time premier of New South Wales, who wrote 'I think one of the sad things is that Tony Abbott has started this as a Commonwealth project, and almost a Commonwealth bureaucracy white paper. I think the chances would be a lot better if it was owned by the Federation—by the seven governments rather than the federal government—because this is ultimately the most mutual thing that these governments do' (Greiner, 2014, xi). For Greiner, 'I would have thought the appropriate ownership is in fact the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Call it what you like, structure it as you like, but if you want it to succeed, you are better off having some commonality of ownership' (Greiner, 2014, xi).

Kenny (2014a) reported in the *SMH* of the Coalition Government's intention to issue a White Paper on federalism, in its drive to reduce Commonwealth exposure to the states and territories: Kenny (2014a, n.p.) wrote 'along with another white paper into taxation, the federation white paper will inevitably examine the issue considered to be electoral "kryptonite" in Australia—the goods and services tax—as part of the critical structural problem of "vertical fiscal imbalance" '. Abbott's proposed White Paper did not outlast his time as Prime Minister. It was never completed.

Kryptonite or not, through the popular New South Wales Premier, Mike Baird acting as Abbott's mouthpiece, the latter 'knee-deep' in poor opinion polls, two days before the 23 July COAG called for a five per cent increase in the GST to pay for Australia's ever-increasing health-care cost. Some states and territories were hanging out for an increase in the Medicare levy. Baird managed to enlist some support from two other premiers, one of

whom was Jay Weatherill, Labor Premier from South Australia, indicating political party lines are problematic at COAG. Clearly, the corollary to this would be a withdrawal of Commonwealth financial support for states and territories, particularly in the areas of Health and Education (Nicholls, 2015). Again, Nicholls (2015, n.p.) reported: ‘This is the problem that arises because states do nearly all of the costly service delivery, but do not possess the revenue-raising powers and thus are beholden to the Commonwealth for grants’.

Illustrating the difficulty of establishing a consensus, the 23 July COAG hosted by Baird, with Sydney’s Victoria Barracks situated in Paddington as its venue, the meeting was preceded by a day-long retreat, called by Abbott to advance federal relations. The result was a stalemate. This was so despite Health funding being at the top of the agenda, with much behind-the-scenes lobbying for an increase in the GST, or an increase in the Medicare levy in what was for many an issue of national importance. Abbott was urging an increase in the GST over any changes to the Medicare levy (Lee, 2015). Yet, the states and territories would not come to heel, despite Abbott having many ‘friendly faces’ at the conference. Where does the real power lay in COAG?

As Donnelly (2014, n.p.) argued, ‘the Commonwealth has the money, thus the power’. However for Donnelly (2014), this should be used sensibly, that is, appropriate to principles of what is better for schools, cost-effectiveness and transparency. In responding to Caldwell (2014, n.p.) who described increased Commonwealth involvement as a command-and-control model of public policy and governance, where states and territories must comply with certain Commonwealth-imposed conditions to receive funds: ‘Given the reality of the vertical fiscal imbalance where the central government controls the purse strings, the fact is that jurisdictions and schools have little alternative but to do as they are told’. Yet, as Caldwell (2014) argued, while this increased Commonwealth control has evolved, so too, has there occurred falling standards in education in Australia, as measured by international standards such as PISA.

Kevin Rudd's promise of an 'educational revolution'

To vote-winning acclaim and almost no opposition, Kevin Rudd promised an 'education revolution' as policy for the 2007 election. Kayrooz and Parker (2010) argued Rudd's education policy was paved with good intentions to redress long-term deficiencies inherited largely from the Howard years of over-commitment to funding private school education. Yet, the Rudd 'education revolution' for many, did not reach its full promise. For example, Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 161) argued Rudd's education policy 'lacked the strategic and structural blueprint needed to realise its underlying ideals'. Did the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments contribution to the Commonwealth involvement in school education deserve the title 'revolution'? It may well be that the revolution was coming from without in the form of globalism.

The Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments commenced on 3 December 2007. In June 2010 Julia Gillard assumed power. Internationally, the global financial crisis (GFC) was underway as the Rudd Labor Party assumed office. Internationally, this was the worst economic depression since the Great Depression of 1929, and the latter was for many countries lasting through to World War II. This unexpected advent of the GFC precipitated one of the fastest surges of Federal Government spending on education in Australia's recent history. Certainly, the government's hurried and uncoordinated consultation and implementation economic processes, with echoes of some of the Whitlam Government policies, led to some publicly and politically damaging outcomes, and may have even contributed to Rudd's replacement. All of this ultimately played a role in undermining the confidence of the Australian public and also Rudd's own party, and possibly contributing to a poor public perception of the government's achievements in educational policy.

Alarmed Australia was about to slip into recession and fearful of the economic and political consequences, the new Rudd Labor Governments hastily conceived of some massive national programs to alleviate the

impending crises. Under the Howard administration the government had built up a massive surplus. In Paul Kelly's (2008, n.p.) words: 'During their first term Howard and Costello could not foresee the long revenue surge that lay before them and the impact of the China-driven commodities boom from the year 2000 onwards'. Kelly (2008, n.p.) argued, 'in reality, for most of the Howard era the economy has driven the surplus rather than the surplus having driven the long expansion'. The result was that the Howard Government succeeded in virtually eliminating government debt and the entrenchment of the surplus in the range of 1-1.7 percentage points of GDP.

Consequently, the Rudd Government Treasury was the beneficiary of billions of dollars, the largest in Australia's history. Potentially, it was a great economic and political asset, but also could be a double-edged sword: To mismanage it would be extremely politically dangerous. The GFC would define the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government's engagement with school education. This realisation sharpened the sword of the conservatives and the media which gave them voice.

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 161) detailed how 'the GFC precipitated one of the fastest spending sprees on education in the nation's recent history. In 2009-10, the states received \$19.4 billion in Specific Purpose Payments from the Commonwealth to support state education services—an increase of 64.4 per cent compared with the \$11.8 billion the states received in 2008-09'. Moreover, 'in addition, further funding was allocated as part of the federal finances reform package agreed by COAG in November 2008, the Commonwealth and states/territories reform based on National Partnership Agreements relating to the Smarter Schools Program for Quality Teaching (\$550 million), Low SES (socio-economic status) School Communities (\$1.5 billion), literacy and numeracy, and the Productive Places programs' (Australian Government, 2010, 161) It included the funding announced under the 'computers in schools' Digital Education Revolution (DER) program. Australians had never seen anything like this.

Moreover, there were other initiatives. The Trade Training Centres in Schools provided \$2.5 billion over ten years to enable all secondary schools to apply for funding up to \$1.5m for Trade Training Centres (DEEWR, 2010c). Described on greater detail below, other system-wide initiatives included the development of the national curriculum for Kindergarten to Year 12 by means of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the development of the *MySchool* web site (About ACARA 2010) to encourage transparency in school performance data, reporting and assessment.

Apropos this research, given the limited space there is little to be gained from an analysis of every aspect of the so-called Rudd education revolution, rather simply to attend to the impact of the major programs. But first, this research needs to make an observation concerning the influences on national curricula.

Risk society, moral panic and national curricula

In my *Risk Society and Educational Policy* (Rodwell, 2018), I argued risk society and moral panic walks hand-in-glove. Moreover, Harris-Hart (2010) has shown:

One way in which the Federal government has sought to hijack State/Territory curriculum control is through the use of discourse. Specifically, this paper has highlighted the ways in which rhetoric has systematically been utilised by successive Federal governments (of varying political complexion) to generate a perception of mistrust and crisis. This has also generated the false perception that a national curriculum will provide a panacea to a wide range of educational problems; that is the perception that a standardised national curriculum will result in greater access, equity and educational outcomes for all students (Harris-Hart, 2010, 312).

It can be argued the national curriculum is highly politicised, and needs to be seen through the lens of risk society theory and moral panic theory.

Illustrating the need for further analysis of social construct terms and theories such as moral panic and risk society, Kostogriz (2011, 202) makes

an important observation concerning globalism, moral panics, risk society and the Commonwealth's drive for a national curriculum: 'The paradox of developing a national curriculum ... in Australia mirrors some key contradictions faced by late modern societies around the world'. Consequently, 'the more they become conscious of living in conditions of globalisation and experience the effects of the borderless and interconnected world, the more these conditions are perceived as a burden' (Kostogriz, 2011, 202). Now, the Commonwealth seeks 'stricter control of their national spaces—for example, through a national curriculum—to minimise risks associated with globalisation. The risks then provide a rationale for curriculum change to address the effects of globalisation on the nation in the near future' (Kostogriz, 2011, 202). Not surprisingly, then: '*The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* identifies global integration and international mobility, the rise of Asian economies such as China and India, technological change, environmental, social and economic pressures and continuing advances of information and communication technologies as the key areas to which education should respond on a national scale, as well as anticipating further changes in order to set out "what will be taught, what students need to learn and the expected quality of that learning" ' (ACARA, 2010, 4-5, cited in Kostogriz, 2011, 202).

Thus, if they can be considered in the strict meaning of policy, and given the role the states and territories play in their development, the ACARA Curriculum, NAPLAN, *MySchool* and AITSL in this view should be considered in the same way as Commonwealth policies on border security and asylum seekers.

The BER and alleged rorts

Matten (2004, 387) recognised 'political approaches to tackle risk find themselves regularly confronted with certain mental barriers', and this was certainly the case with the BER of the Australian Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments. Matten [2004, 387] was describing environmental policies and politics, but the same research applies to the national policies and

politics of the use of school education as an economic lever and a mechanism to manage economic risk on a national scale.

When the Rudd Government was swept to power in 2007 it knew that the outgoing Howard Government had bequeathed a huge surplus due to a decade of very favourable commodity export balances, particular in its trade in iron ore and coal with China. However, then came the GFC with its dire risks to the Australian economy. With fears of a global recession, early in 2009 the Rudd Government announced the \$42bn in economic stimulus spending.

The shock of the GFC was still being felt through until 2011, with many countries ‘knee-deep’ in recession. Supported by a strong surplus budgets through the last stages of the Howard years (1996-2007), with the onset of the GFC the Rudd Government was able to divert a recession through pumping huge amounts of money in such projects as ‘the Pink Bats’ scheme and the BER (Harrison, 2010). The latter came under heavy criticism from the Australian National Audit Office, and particularly from News Corporation, and was used often by opponents of the Rudd Government as a political weapon.

Totalling A\$16.2 billion, the BER had three elements:

- Primary schools (\$14.2b): providing new and refurbished halls, libraries and classrooms
- Science and Language Centres for secondary schools (\$821.8m): providing new and refurbished science laboratories and language learning centres
- National School Pride program (\$1.28b): providing new and refurbished covered outdoor learning areas, shade structures, sporting facilities and other environmental programs.

Almost from the very beginning, the veracity of Matten’s (2004, 387) observations concerning the politics of the national risk strategy were

obvious. Indeed, the program has attracted attention from critics of the government for alleged ‘roorting’ and for not delivering value-for-money outcomes. All the essential elements of a moral panic were soon obvious, with an obvious political agenda and News Corporation heading the media attack, for many observers successfully linking the supposed BER roorts with another Rudd Government scandal in the form of the pink batts (Home Insulation Program) imbroglio.

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 162) show how by far the biggest of the Rudd responses to the GFC was the BER, for them, ‘a rushed response, in part to avert the [perceived] collapse of the building industry’. Indeed, to any observer all of this proceeded at an extraordinary pace, perhaps even reminiscent of the Whitlam years. It was, however, a forced pace, a forced march to keep the Australian economy from sliding into recession. Within six months of the announcement, the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) had approved projects for about 8000 schools (DEEWR, 2010d, n.p., cited in Kayrooz & Parker, 2010, 162). The DEEWR recorded by 2010 all BER funding was allocated for each of its three elements: \$14.1 billion for 7961 primary schools covering 10 665 projects including new libraries, classrooms and refurbishment; \$821.8 million for Science and Language Centres (SLCs) in 537 schools for the construction or refurbishment of existing science laboratories or language learning centres; and \$1.28 billion for the National School Pride (NSP) program to 9,497 schools for 13 047 projects including refurbishment or construction of buildings and sporting grounds (DEEWR, 2010d, n.p., cited in Kayrooz & Parker, 2010, 162). By 2010, the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, had also released the BER National Coordinator’s Implementation Report outlining the progress of these initiatives in the first eight months of the program (DEEWR, 2009, n.p., cited in Kayrooz & Parker, 2010, 162). By this time, greatly assisted by the News Corporation media, the Government’s detractors were gaining prominence in the national media.

The government was committed to spending \$16.2 billion for building or upgrading all of Australia's government and non-government schools (DEEWR 2010a) as part of the \$42 billion Nation Building Economic Stimulus package. However, even by August 2010, the media had the BER program in its sights and under fire. For example, only weeks away from a federal election, Rodgers (2010, n.p.) from *ABC News* reported 'the ... BER Taskforce, headed by banker Brad Orgill, has today released its interim report into the program, which has been beset by claims of waste and profiteering'. Orgill's report called 'for changes to how future projects are administered and tougher rules on what constitutes value for money'.

Indeed, the BER was rushed, but it needed to be because of the possibility of a recession which many other comparable commodity-exporting countries were facing (e.g., New Zealand, Brazil, Canada, US). Yet, it gave the media a stick to beat up the government just before an election, a government already in strife with its change of leadership.

Whilst claiming there were only 100 complaints about the BER despite 2,400 projects under way, and to counter what the government perceived to be a media 'beat-up' led by *The Australian*, Education Minister Gillard established an implementation task force to investigate claims of roting and excessive project management fees. This task force and other independent reports established a high level of alleged roting, especially in New South Wales government schools (Hannaford, 2010, 6). Overall, the criticism was damaging, but Minister Gillard overrode claims of incompetence by launching investigations—a tactic that had eluded her environment ministerial colleague in respect to the pink batts saga (J. Parker, 2014).

Despite the partisan campaign run by *The Australian* and other News Corporation media outlets, along with the relentless lampooning by the Opposition, constantly connecting the BER with the pink batts scandal there were some commentators who saw great merit in BER. For example, *News.com.au* (2010, n.p.) reported 'it has been condemned as failure but the Rudd Government's ... [BER] may have saved the Australian economy

from posting a negative quarter of growth'. The report continued, 'official figures released yesterday showed the Australian economy grew by a mere 0.5 per cent in the first three months of 2010, helped substantially by an 11.6 per cent increase in Federal Government investment'.

Yet, years later, the News Corporation press would not leave the BER behind. With headlines announcing 'pie-in-the-sky Labor is still wasting cash', Keene (2014, n.p.) from News Corporation's *Daily Telegraph*, more than four years after the commencement of the BER reported 'a former government school infrastructures is wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money years after it came to an end'. This was after two New South Wales public schools were closed down from the beginning of 2015. While blaming Labor for this alleged waste, this near-bizarre journalism failed to mention while it was a Labor state government that authorised the BER infrastructure at the particular schools, it was the current New South Wales Coalition Government which decided to close the schools. Indeed, right through to 2016, the various Australian media either supported (e.g., Jericho, 2016) or condemned (e.g., Benson, 2016) the Rudd Government's response to the GFC. It seems as if it was only a matter of opinion. However, professional educators are definite in their views.

Rick Riddle is a retired New South Wales primary school principal with service with the NSW Department of Education from 1981 to 2006. Beginning on October 2009 the NSW Department of School Education brought him in from retirement and employed him on contract as a BER Principal Liaison Officer (PLO) for four days per week in a panel of ten retired primary school principals. His contract concluded in May 2011. Riddle (2014) reports a starkly different experience of the alleged roting than that reported by Hannaford (2010), and constantly presented to the Australian public through *The Australian*. Riddle (2014) reported 'with a budget of \$3.2 billion to implement the BER in New South Wales primary schools, the state was divided into six regions. On tender the contracts to build the projects in 1100 schools was given to six building companies, most of which had little experience working on school projects'. According

to Riddle (2014), ‘the PLO’s role was to liaise with the various builders and individual schools and ensure a smooth implementation of the project’.

Riddle had a special task. Schools were allocated funds (from \$100 000 to \$3 000 000). Most sites were able to build their projects within budget, but a number on difficult sites (e.g., in the Blue Mountains) required additional funding. As the pool of funding was fixed, he had the task of negotiating with under-budget schools to transfer unused funds into the pool to subsidise those with a shortfall. Riddle (2014) reported this process had the support of the NSW Primary Principals’ Council.

Riddle (2014) reported his other colleagues spent time in the field visiting school sites and being facilitators at site meetings. Most of the companies were used to building large commercial projects, having little idea of schools and how they operated. Much of the PLO’s work was over the telephone, or by computer from head office. Over the period of Riddle’s involvement, he reckoned he spoke directly to over four hundred principals.

Generally, the response of the people he interviewed was very positive. The great majority of principals with whom he dealt (>90%) knew that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for their school to gain a major piece of capital infrastructure with the support of their local community. ‘It was a great legacy’ (Riddle, 2014).

When asked if anybody with whom he came into contact linked the alleged BER rorts with the pink batts scandal, Riddle (2014) responded: ‘Not that I was aware of’, although ‘a common concern was the percentage that the building companies were taking in management fees. Another common response was local builders could have done a cheaper job.’

Riddle (2014) continued: ‘Principals had the opportunity to manage their own project, but once they were made aware of the work involved and legal ramifications none took up the offer’. Moreover, ‘occasionally, we had to remind principals that this was first and foremost an economic stimulus

project, which meant that tradesmen in even the most remote community were employed for a period with attendant benefits to the local community and wider economy’.

Summarising his experience with the BER project, Riddle (2014) stated: ‘I had very positive feelings about the BER. It was run as a private enterprise initiative within the bureaucratic framework of the NSW DET’. Indeed, according to Riddle (2014), ‘under the DET system a school hall from initial planning to hand over would take almost two years but with the BER the same time frame was often less than a year—and there were hundreds of them built. Principals were required to consult with their communities and submit a proposal. This was where it sometimes went wrong’.

Across Bass Strait in Tasmania, Peter Walker, Principal of the Mount Nelson Primary School in Hobart, eight years following the building of a general purpose/assembly hall and specialised music room complex at his school, waxed with enthusiasm for the long-term benefits of the project for the school community. ‘Especially’, he insisted, ‘this was because of the high-level of cooperation between the school community, the Tasmanian Department of Education, and the builders’ (Walker, P., 2016).

Michael Symon, Labor Member for Deakin (Vic.) endorsed Riddle’s (2014) and Walker’s (2016) conclusions, when in 31 October 2012 he reported to the House on his recent visit to the Great Ryrie Primary School in his electorate: ‘On 24 August this year, I had the great pleasure of officially opening the new sports and performance centre at Great Ryrie Primary School in my electorate of Deakin. Great Ryrie Primary School is a very large primary school with over 550 students’ (CofA, 2012, No. 16, 11477). The school services both Heathmont and Ringwood and ‘is growing, as many schools in my electorate are’.

Symon enthused to the House regarding what the BER had contributed to Great Ryrie Primary School: ‘Among other things, these extra rooms now allow their music teacher to teach students learning different instruments in

separate rooms, instead of having to teach them in the same room at the same time—not a good learning experience for anyone’ (CofA, 2012, No. 16, 11477). Moreover, ‘the school received \$2.6 million for this fantastic new facility and they have made use of every single cent of it. It is a great result for our local community which will stand the test of time. ... There are other similar buildings in my electorate where the design has gone outside the template’ (CofA, 2012, No. 16, 11478). However, ‘it is a great example of what can be done when the federal government puts money into our local schools. I am sure the new building will stand the test of time and that it will be there for everyone to see for many years to come’ (CofA, 2012, No. 16, p. 11478). Admittedly, Symon was a dedicated serial advocate in the House glowingly reporting on BER in his electorate, all of which was designed, no doubt to counter in the House the negative public discourse (see, e.g., CofA, 2012, No. 14, 12899-12900).

In regard to the special role the News Corporation media played in the BER saga, reference should be made to Kingdon’s (1984/2003) *Agendas*. In his Chapter 3, Kingdon argued the media has only an indirect effect on agenda-setting, or alternatives. The media fed the political process to the extent that Principal X, whose school was in the constituency of a prominent Adelaide Liberal politicians, told me the same politician would phone him regularly, asking ‘how’s the BER going? What’s going wrong with it now?’ When Principal X (2015) assured him nothing was ‘going wrong’ with it, and that it was the best thing to happen to the school in decades’, the politician seemed to want to hear the opposite. Sure, enough he would phone back in a month or so, looking for negatives on the BER.

It is likely, however, this sustained media attack did affect the BER process in indirect ways. For example, the media may report on issues being discussed in government, making the public more aware and amenable to the various alternatives being discussed. Or promises made during elections may cause individuals or groups to attempt to hold a politician to his word after he is elected. We have seen how four years following the completion of the BER, the News Corporation media was continuing to run stories of

alleged rorting with the process. For what political purpose? Clearly, some empirical research on the topic would add some further light to the actual political influence of the media on agenda-setting, in this instance in regard to education policy and the BER.

The Digital Educational Revolution (DER)

As part of the DER, the Commonwealth provided \$2.2 billion over six years for new information technology (IT) equipment for all secondary schools with students in Years 9 to 12—the National Secondary School Computer Fund; the deployment of high-speed broadband connections to Australian schools; new and continuing teacher training in the use of information and information communications technology (ICT) and online curriculum tools and resources (DEEWR 2010b, n.p.).

Entailing the commitment of a computer or laptop for every Year 9 to Year 12 student in the nation, Kayrooz and Parker (2010) show how the DER sustained heavy criticism. Some cynical commentators asked if schools had the educational capacity to make the best use of this technology (Moyle, 2010, cited in Kayrooz and Parker, 2010, 131). As with the BER, for the DER, for some critics infrastructure spending alone on improved technology would not necessarily make a revolution. As Kayrooz and Parker (2010) argued, in many cases professional development in ICT needed to go hand-in-hand with the new technology. Steve X, a principal of a large secondary school in Adelaide's south east claimed he had not encountered any school professional who did not welcome the new technology, and at the same time recognise the need for professional support for teachers (Steve X, 2015).

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 132) argued, additionally, 'a roll-out of the infrastructure targeted to those areas with the greatest need would have enabled funds to be diverted to other pressing local problems within the school sector'. Of course, more time would be needed to delineate local problems, consult widely and enable timely solutions. Kayrooz and Parker

(2010, 131) contended ‘time was something that the government felt it could not afford’. How did schools perceive this as being a problem?

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 131) reminded us Australian school education takes place in a federalist system. Moreover, ‘the complexity of federal-state school arrangements no doubt created complications. By September 2009 the states and territories had taken different approaches to the computers for schools program’. In New South Wales, for example, Year 9 students would be able to keep their laptops if they completed Year 12. Consequently, Kayrooz and Parker (2010) show ‘under the Commonwealth model, there would be a need to equip every state high school with new technology every year. This would likely be a costly and short-term exercise if some states chose to allow their students to keep computers’.

Enter NAPLAN, *MySchool*, ACARA and AITSL

First, it is important to remember other OECD countries had enacted similar programs as NAPLAN, *MySchool*, ACARA and AITSL. The Australian enactment, however, for these four organisations signifies the continuing impact of economic rationalism and globalisation on Australian school education. In the words of Zajda (2015, 105), ‘the impact of globalisation on educational policy has become a strategically significant issue, for it expresses one of the most ubiquitous, yet poorly understood phenomena of modernity’. That being so, an examination of the links between globalisation and risk society theory adds much to our understanding of both globalisation and risk society theory, and their impact on the emerging Commonwealth influence on school education. Secondly, and in a more macro sense the formation of these organisations indicate the continuing influence of federalism in federal-state-territory relations in the form of what Menzies (1967) described as increased centripetal forces.

NAPLAN

Responding to globalisation imperatives, the Rudd government had argued school standards were not high enough and failing schools had to be held accountable. After many years of planning and at times inaction under the

Howard Government, NAPLAN commenced in schools in 2008 with all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 nationally assessed in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy (Kayrooz & Parker, 2010).

According to New South Wales Public Schools (DET NSW, n.d.) the NAPLAN tests, which commenced in 2008 were instigated after MCEETYA determined ‘national testing in literacy and numeracy would proceed for the full cohort of students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 from 2008 onward’. The NAPLAN tests would be used to determine how students were performing in relation to the National Minimum Standards in the areas of reading, language conventions, writing and numeracy skills for their particular year level.

For the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), for example, the main purpose of the NAPLAN tests is to measure whether literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge provide ‘the critical foundation for other learning and for their productive and rewarding participation in the community’ (Freeman, 2009, n.p.). The introduction of national literacy and numeracy tests in 2008 has provided consistency, comparability and transferability of information on students’ literacy and numeracy performance nationally.

NAPLAN and *MySchool*: the first cohort is through

As with many of the Whitlam initiatives, many of those taken during the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments soon gained bipartisan support in the federal parliament. By the end of 2014, the second year of the Abbott Coalition government, NAPLAN results were gaining considerable traction in the community. For example, William (2014, n.p.) reporter for Adelaide’s *Advertiser*, stated: ‘Fewer South Australian Year 9 students are reaching minimum national standards in NAPLAN tests than when they were in Year 3, pointing to “a concerning trend” which could affect students’ employment prospects, educators warn’. Significantly, these were NAPLAN results show the results for the first cohort of ‘NAPLAN students. The national tests began in 2008, when this year’s cohort of Year 9s were in

Year 3. They are the first group of students to have completed the entire NAPLAN regime at two-year intervals.

MySchool

Reading as if a political pamphlet, the OECD document, *Delivering School Transparency in Australia: National Reporting through MySchool*, states ‘the launch of the *MySchool* website (www.myschool.edu.au) on 28 January 2010 forms part of a set of major reforms to Australia’s national education system’ (OECD, 2012, 3). It was meant to be a triumph for transparency and federal-state-territory cooperation. Indeed, according to the OECD report, ‘the federal distribution of responsibility for schooling, and the Australian Government’s role in this, historically, has imposed significant limitations on the supply by government of genuinely national data about Australian schools to ministers and to the community. *MySchool* and full population national student assessments in literacy and numeracy have dramatically closed this data gap’ (OECD, 2012, 3).

Kayrooz and Parker, (2010, 133) argued with NAPLAN, ‘Labor policy was not particularly innovative or tailored to the Australian context. It was derived largely from the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent the United States. Reports on the effectiveness of similar schemes in the United Kingdom and the United States were mixed’.

‘Transparent accountability’, Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 133) contended ‘was perhaps the only intervention that had the potential to transform the educational landscape. This feature of Labor’s educational policy was informed in part by Gillard’s visits to the United States and, to a lesser extent, to the United Kingdom’ Kayrooz and Parker (2010) contended NAPLAN and *MySchool* achieved this.

The supposed achievements in respect to *MySchool* were about ‘ministerial leadership and negotiation across federal-state lines was pivotal in gaining agreement from all states and territories to this Australian Government initiative’ (OECD, 2012, 3). The Australian Government ‘clearly articulated

the rationale for making nationally comparable school information publicly available, and promoted greater flexibility for education expenditure in return for more accountability and transparency of outcomes through agreements which tied reporting of these outcomes to funding’ (OECD, 2012, 3). Moreover, ‘by ensuring the policy details were based on scientific evidence provided by independent experts, political interests were prevented from driving the agenda. Agreement at the highest levels of government and a long-term vision for progressing this initiative, including through well-defined and adhered-to processes, also contributed to the success of *MySchool*’ (OECD, 2012, 3).

However, the AEU opposed the use of the NAPLAN tests. Jensen (2010) from the Grattan Institute supported NAPLAN. Formed in 2008, the Grattan Institute is ‘an independent think-tank dedicated to developing high quality public policy for Australia’s future.’ Its *modus operandi* is to respond ‘to a widespread view in government and business that Australia needed a non-partisan think-tank providing independent, rigorous and practical solutions to some of the country’s most pressing problems’ (Grattan Institute, n.d.). In the Fairfax press, Jensen (2010, n.p.) condemned the AEU for its stance on *MySchool* and NAPLAN, declaring ‘NAPLAN and *MySchool*’ are different. Instead of outright opposition, the AEU should work to address the problems with the *MySchool* website, and allow students to sit these important assessments. In doing so, they will ensure the best outcome for students’.

Clearly, the rhetoric was—and continued to be—to make every school transparently accountable for literacy and numeracy performance. Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 163) however, demonstrate there was ‘little critical analysis of this concept’. ‘A key concept in quality assurance amongst professional bodies’, and accountability, ‘usually involves a blend of internal (self-review) and external (inspection) indicators’ (163). For Kayrooz and Parker (2010) this was another ingredient of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments’ failing in education policy, collectively contributing to a fall from office in 2013 at the end of its second term.

ACARA

ACARA was established by an act of the Commonwealth in December 2008 and becoming operational in mid-2019. According to its own website ACARA is ‘the independent statutory authority responsible for the overall management and development of a national curriculum, the National Assessment Program (NAP) and a national data collection and reporting program supporting 21st century learning for all Australian students (n.d., n.p.). ‘The organisation receives direction from the Education Council (previously known as SCSEEC). Through this body, all state, territory and federal ministers of education agree on ACARA’s work plan and set a common direction for the National Assessment Program (NAP)’ (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.).

The ACARA website continued: ‘ACARA’s work sits around the three pillars of curriculum, assessment and reporting for school education between Foundation and Year 12’ (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.). Moreover, ‘this work is carried out in close consultation and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, governments, state and territory education authorities, professional education associations, community groups and the general public’ (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.).

In addition to providing the NAP, ACARA’s other core areas of activity are curriculum and reporting: ‘ACARA is responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Year 12. Once the relevant learning areas of the Australian Curriculum have been substantially implemented in schools, the National Assessment Program tests will reflect the new curriculum framework’ (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.). The website continued: ‘ACARA is responsible for the collection and reporting of data on Australian schools. ACARA provides this information in national reports and summary reports for states, territories and jurisdictions’ (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.). Moreover, ‘another reporting aspect of ACARA’s work

is the *MySchool* website. This site provides parents and the community with contextualised information about Australian schools, including student make up, school finances and school-level NAPLAN performance' (About ACARA, n.d., n.p.).

ACARA also is manifesting issues associated with politicisation and an ideological push. Woodpower (2013, 3) showed how 'in 2006, Prime Minister John Howard's call for the 'root and branch renewal' of Australian history initiated an ideologically driven process of developing an Australian national history curriculum which was completed by the Labor Government in 2012'. In fact, 'rather than being focussed on pedagogy, the process was characterised by the use of the curriculum as an ideological tool ... underl[ying] the history curriculum being invested with such potent cultural authority' (Woodpower, 2013, 3). Clearly, politicians are attracted strongly to the History curriculum as a potent interpretation of their particular ideology.

When Shadow Minister for Education, Pyne had long promised a review of the ACARA Curriculum. Early in his term as Minister of Education, he delivered by appointing 'Professor Ken Wiltshire AO and Dr Kevin Donnelly to conduct an independent review of the Australian Curriculum' (Aust. Gov. Dept of Ed, n.d., n.p.). The review was evaluate 'the robustness, independence and balance of the process and development of the Australian Curriculum. It also sought to understand whether the Australian Curriculum is delivering what students need, parents expect and the nation requires in an increasingly competitive world' (Aust. Gov. Dept of Ed, n.d., n.p.).

A wave of cynicism swept elements of Australian society. Andrew Green (2014, n.p.), for example from *ABC News* reported 'former teacher and ex-Liberal Party staffer Kevin Donnelly says Australian education has become too secular, and the federation's Judeo-Christian heritage should be better reflected in the curriculum'. Or, when Donnelly declared corporal punishment still had a role in a school's behavioural management regime many were left aghast, receiving international headlines—see, for example,

Noble (2014). Many Australians waited with a bated breath for the report to be tabled.

The final report was tabled in the Australian Parliament on 10 October 2014 (Review of the Australian Curriculum: final report n.d.). With a one-word headline summarising the report—*détente*. The *Inside Story's* (2014, n.p.) report on the report using this headline is noteworthy: 'Christopher Pyne's appointment of right-wing warrior Kevin Donnelly as one of two reviewers of the national curriculum was greeted with howls of outrage' (n.p.). *Inside Story* (2014, n.p.) continued: 'The just-released Donnelly—Wiltshire report, by contrast, has provoked little more than quibbles and grumbles, many of a practical rather than an ideological kind. Troops readied for a resumption of the culture wars have been stood down. An air of puzzlement prevails'.

While the report was reasonably inert, of significance is the susceptibility and possibility of political interference in the ACARA Curriculum. This is one significant aftermath of decades of growing engagement of the Commonwealth in school education.

In his Chapter 3, Kingdon (1984/2003) explained there are a number of groups not officially working for the government, but who have some influence on agenda-setting and policy-making. In respect to education during the Abbott years, these interest groups have been very important to decision-making. Kingdon (1984/2003) argued their significance can vary significantly depending on the issue. Interest groups can get involved in both agenda-setting and/or defining alternatives, as we have seen with the Wiltshire-Donnelly ACARA review.

Academics, researchers, and consultants such as Wiltshire and Donnelly, according to Kingdon (1984/2003) are important in defining alternatives as well—either through the long-term process of developing academic theories that are eventually applied to society through policy, or by directly studying or working on issues relevant to current events and helping to debate and develop policy. With its comparatively inert findings, the Wiltshire-

Donnelly review tended to consolidate rather than disrupt public opinion in Pyne's administration of the Commonwealth's leverage on the states and territories in respect to education.

In general, based on his Chapters 2 and 3, Kingdon (1984/2003) concluded there is a difference between visible and hidden participants. Visible participants—for example Abbott and Pyne—are more likely to play a role in defining broad agenda items. It is, however, the hidden participants—bureaucrats, interest groups, academics and political policy people such as Donnelly—who play the larger role in defining specific alternatives to be considered. This was manifest with the ACARA review process.

During the ACARA review process, however, there were some interesting incidents—or accidents?—adding some further insights into the policy-making process and, consequently, some possible insights into aspects of political leverage in federalism, and the influence of the Commonwealth on school education.

In his Chapter 6, 'The Policy Primeval Soup', Kingdon (1984/2003) contended researchers, academics, and others—and here, we may include Donnelly—are the primary players in the policy stream, and their focus is on developing specific alternatives. Within their particular political group, they develop new ideas, discuss the ideas with each other, and combine and change existing ideas. Kingdon described this process as a 'primeval soup' in which ideas float around, combine, split, and rise or sink in popularity. Within the policy stream, the method for building consensus involves discussion and debate—people try to convince each other of the worthiness of particular ideas.

The ability of a community to come up with and agree on alternatives is affected by their cohesiveness. In what appeared to be a strange outburst regarding the ACARA Curriculum reflecting more Judeo-Christian heritage, and an apparent call for more corporal punishment in schools. As a part of

the review process, was Donnelly floating ideas and seeking public reaction? Or were these unfortunate slips of the tongue?

In his Chapter 6, Kingdon (1984/2003) argued it is important the political process regularly includes the ‘floating’ of ideas into the public and political discourse, allowing people to become familiar with particular options well before any decision needs to be made. Was Donnelly serious in the floating of these ideas, or would he have rather not have said these things? Were these statements a part of deliberate strategy for policy change. Whatever, the reason, there certainly was little positive public response.

Kingdon’s (1984/2003 Chapter 7—‘The Political Stream’—reminds readers the primary actors in the political stream are the visible government actors—Abbott and Pyne. The political stream primarily comes up with agenda items rather than alternatives. Within this group, consensus is formed primarily through bargaining and making concessions to build a coalition of agreement. The political considerations can be based on the national mood in favour of spending, budget conscious, according to the prevailing *zeitgeist*. A major drive during the early years was to return the budget to a surplus, yet at the same time with an eye to global markets and administration through ideals of economic rationalism.

Kingdon (1984/2003, chapter 7) further contended a major source of political opportunity may arise from the turnover of key personnel. If a new administration comes to power, particularly if it is of a different party, the political opportunities may change significantly. Turnover of political appointees can have a similar effect. In this respect it is worth noting what the reviewers had to say about the ACARA governance: ‘What became evident during this Review is the unsatisfactory nature of ACARA’s governance ... Clearly, any curriculum is developed to accommodate the competing demands from education authorities and is approved by a Board that is mainly made up of representatives of those education authorities, is not independent’ (Review of the Australian Curriculum: final report 2014, 4). Indeed, ‘that ACARA has been established and operates as it does owes

more to the nature and requirements of federalism than to purely educational requirements. This Report suggested an overhaul of ACARA's governance is required to ensure it is truly independent' (Review of the Australian Curriculum: final report 2014, 4).

Of course, this was code for a restructuring of the ACARA administration, and an opportunity for Abbott and Pyne to appoint some 'friendly faces' on the Board.

AITSL

The AITSL website stated its 'mission is to promote excellence in teacher and school leader practice for the benefit of all young Australians (AITSL, 2013). Further explaining its mission, the website continued: 'This mission is collaborative in nature, drawing upon the talent and commitment of the Australian Government; the eight state and territory education departments and their ministers; the Catholic and independent school sectors; professional and community organisations; teacher regulatory authorities; unions; the higher education sector; national and international research and experts; and, of course, teachers and principals throughout Australia' (AITSL, 2013, n.p.).

AITSL was established in January 2010 and is funded by the Australian Government. While the organisation acts on behalf of all of Australia's Education Ministers—state, territory and federal—it is nevertheless not a government department. It is a company limited by guarantee, governed by an independent Board of Directors. The Australian Government, as represented by the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, is the sole member of the company (AITSL, 2013).

All of Australia's school education jurisdictions are committed to establishing AITSL Standards in their schools, colleges and education administrations, but in reality there is no uniformity to this.

Documentation supporting AITSL's involvement in the development of a national approach to quality professional experience can be found in the recent *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers Report* (2014) by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG). Just to what extent in practical terms does TEMAG policy impact on each state and territory? This is determined by federalism. Depending on their own policies, this process varies with each state and territory, but is overseen by the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) which is the incorporated association established by the teacher registration and accreditation authorities across Australia and New Zealand. According to its own website (ATRA, n.d., n.p.) 'ATRA was established to facilitate cooperation and collaboration across the Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions in the regulation of the teaching profession. It was formally recognised by MCEETYA in May 2005'.

The four organisations under review

What is the significance of the founding, *modus operandi* and politics of these four organisations?

First, it is important to remember other OECD countries had enacted similar programs (OECD, 2012). The Australian enactment, however, for these four organisations signifies the continuing impact of economic rationalism and the impact globalisation on Australian school education. Secondly, and in a more macro sense it indicates the continuing influence of corporate federalism in federal-state-territory relations.

During the early period of AITSL, its Executive sought feedback from key stakeholders, and generally the responses were positive. For example, Emmel (n.d.) National Executive Director, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) wrote in strong and unqualified support of AITSL.

Others, however, are more critical. For example, Tuinamuan (2011) cited some UK-based research casting some severe doubts about the overall benefits of AITSL on Australian school education. Tuinamuan (2011, 81) referred to findings from a British government-funded *Cambridge Primary Review*, where Alexander (2010, 7) stated ‘ “in many primary schools a professional culture of excitement, inventiveness and healthy skepticism has been supplanted by one of dependency, compliance and even fear; and the approach may in some cases have depressed both standards of learning and the quality of teaching” ’ (Alexander, 2010, 7, cited in Tuinamuan, 2011, 81.).

Agreeing with the many Australian stakeholders—for example, Emmel (n.d.)—Tuinamuan (2011, 81) wrote: ‘At first glance, this understanding of standards as applied to the teaching profession does seem to make sense’ Tuinamuan (2011, 81-2) argued: ‘Teacher standards are part of a wider, more complex web of factors that impact in significant ways upon the work of teachers, and the learning that happens in schools’. Citing international research, Tuinamuan (2011, 81-82) insisted: ‘Standing back and considering alternative discourses opens up spaces for contestation of “commonsense” understandings about teacher professional standards, and also assists in re-directing our focus to issues that really matter for education and schooling in our various communities’.

For Tuinamuan (2011) there are some serious issues with AITSL. She cited a speech to Victorian principals in November 2010 on high-stakes test-driven accountability by Caldwell (2010, 6) who argued ‘the issue today is not about testing *per se*, but about the “purposes that are served and the impact of the testing and reporting regimes” ’. (Tuinamuan (2011, 81-2). Caldwell was referring to NAPLAN testing. Similarly, Tuinamuan (2011, 82) has argued through an analysis of the debates on standards it is not the testing regimes being questioned, rather the way in which they may be politicized that matters: ‘Questioning these uses and the consequent impact on the work of teachers and teacher educators will perhaps help to unmask

some of the unintended effects of an institutionalised framework of teacher professional standards on the “quality” of our education systems, allowing a more critical engagement with alternative discourses’.

Bourke (2011, 254) found ‘the implementation of professional standards neither ensures the enhancement of professionalism nor is a necessary precondition for doing so’. Moreover, often imbedded in these professional standards are serious issues of controlling teacher behaviours. According to Bourke (2011, 255) ‘professional standards have been justified using economic policy discourses and derisory comments under the guise of enhancing professionalism’. Moreover, ‘what these professional standards documents posit are regulatory standards in a managerial discourse of professionalism in order to regulate or control teachers. Although standards documents claim to be inclusive of teachers’ voices, the findings from this study reveal otherwise’.

Of course, this form of professional control readily can be politically motivated, depending on the government controlling the institutions. In this regard, Pyne (2014a, n.p.) made his intentions clear: ‘There will be a greater focus on teacher quality with two new appointments to the Board of ... AITSL, the organisation leading national work to lift the quality and status of the teaching profession’. In November 2014, he provided the Australian public with more information stating ‘improving initial teacher education, helping principals be better leaders and providing better professional development tools for teachers will form part of the work of the re-focussed ... AITSL in 2015’.

Ferrari (2014, 4) reported on what Pyne had written to state and territory ministers of education regarding AITSL’s new statement of intent regarding its planned measures ‘to boost teaching quality’. Pyne had requested Professor John Hattie, AITSL new Chair to review teacher accreditation throughout the forty-eight Australian institutions responsible for teacher education. This came at a time of an alleged gross oversupply of teachers—‘in some areas of 30 per cent’. Ferrari (2014, 4) reported Hattie as warning

there would be a culling of the nation's 400 teaching courses, at present holding provisional accreditation. The emphasis now would be on quality.

An article by Marks (2014) appeared in the same edition of *The Australian* as did Ferrari's report on Hattie new focus with AITSL. The article was a summary of Marks' 2014, publication *Education, social background and cognitive ability: the decline of the social*, an argument cognitive ability is the principal determining index to a student's success in school education. The corollary to this, of course, is for most effective outcome for money expended on education, is to first educate the students with cognitive ability.

Under the influence of advisors such as Donnelly, Pyne continued to be a rambunctious figure both in the House and in society-at-large. Mockler and Thompson (2013, n.p.) argued: 'It is commendable that Mr Pyne intends to take advice on education, but it is concerning that he has already decided what constitutes the 'best model for teaching in the world': a return to 'traditional pedagogy' and 'didactic teaching methods', as opposed to the 'child-centred learning'. Mockler and Thompson (2013) continued their argument by stating international research into effective pedagogical methods demonstrate individuals learn in many different ways, and there is no one best pedagogy.

How did the AITSL measures work out in the political reality of federalism? When considering the national AITSL landscape, it is worth remembering the degree to which state and territory differ in regard to school educational provisions. For example, when Pyne called for compulsory mathematics and science, we should remember, as Cooke (2015, n.p.) showed, it is not compulsory for Year 11 and 12 students in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and the ACT. Queensland and South Australian students must take one maths subject in their final years of school'.

ACARA Curriculum, AITSL and Vertical Accountability Imbalance [VAI]

In earlier pages describing VAI there was a linkage to alleged corruption in state and territory governments, but VAI may also be referred to when describing the often-stark differences in the adoption by each state and territory of the ACARA National Curriculum and the AITSL Professional Standards. A Tasmanian educational bureaucrat explained ‘the Standards are just fine, and we have adopted them as far as possible, but because of budgetary issues we can’t go as far as some of the mainland states. For example, here we don’t bother with the use of e-portfolios as a means to demonstrate an understanding and adoption of the various standards, as do some education systems’ (Tony X, 2015). The average Tasmanian teacher may never have heard of the AITSL Professional Standards, and the Tasmanian Government’s stance on the issue is not likely to be a disadvantage at an election.

In the Australian federal system state and territory educational bureaucrats are responsible to their political masters, who *inter alia* have an eye on the political mood of their constituents and their Treasury. If a policy such as the AITSL Professional Standards or the ACARA National Curriculum, especially Years 11 and 12 are going to be an impost on the Treasury and are not going to reap any political advantage state and territory governments may decline to implement the finer details of the policies.

The politics of alleged continuing public-private school inequities

For many educational commentators and reporters, Gonski funding was essential for Australian government schools, and its demise under the Abbott-Turnbull Government two years into its first term continued to receive national attention. For example, Bagshaw (2015, n.p.) reported on research undertaken showing ‘the average public school student could receive up to \$100 less a year in state and federal government funding than a similar independent school student by 2020 without the final two years of Gonski reforms’. The Bagshaw (2015, n.p.) report continued: ‘The ‘Private school, public cost’ report ... has found state and federal government funding for nearly half of the nation’s independent schools could outstrip public funding for the average public school within the next five years’.

Moreover, ‘the reports authors also found that public funding for up to 75 per cent of Catholic schools across the country would outstrip funding for similar public schools by 2016’.

Authorities in the private school sector slammed the Bonner-Shepherd report as being on unreliable, biased and based on outdated data (Bagshaw, 2015, (n.p.). The NSW Secondary Principals’ Council, Chris Bonnor, and education researcher, Bernie Shepherd, researched and authored the report. Relevant here, however, is the fact issues surrounding the Commonwealth’s public/private funding dated back to at least the first Rudd Government.

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 133) argued: ‘Despite the huge outlay on infrastructure (BER), the Rudd government avoided addressing the underlying structural inequities in the educational system’. There was no Peter Karmel here, and both for Rudd and Gillard David Gonski was still around the corner. ‘Reform of the funding model was intentionally deferred until the assumed second term of a Labor government to avoid the backlash that Mark Latham’s policy reform of school funding had suffered at the previous election’.

Drawing on research by J. Keating (2009), Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 133) argued ‘whilst equity and excellence had been superficially tackled, the sector lacked the reforms needed to address the complex and inconsistent forms of funding and governance arrangements that entrenched sectoral division’. The burden of educating those with the greatest need fell on a relatively small proportion of schools.

The Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments anticipated Gonski would achieve some alleviation of continuing public-private school inequities. Politics, however, would overtake the issue, with the final Gonski report being accepted, and its recommendations being negotiated between the Commonwealth and the states and territories, and finally the September 2013 election acting as a brake on these developments.

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 134) also held ‘the policy setting also failed to address the inequities set up by the funding of private schools’. Caldwell (2009, n.p.) supported this argument, stating ‘the much-vaunted ‘education revolution’ is heading for failure because it has not adopted key strategies that international experience tells us are important for success’. For Caldwell (2010, n.p.), ‘most of what has been achieved has simply merged state and territory bureaucracies into a single framework of decision-making that may ultimately have no impact on how students learn’. Caldwell (2010, n.p.) feared: ‘Australia may end up with one of the most centralised and bureaucratically organised systems of education in the world, with ministers left flailing for explanations as performance flatlines and expectations are unfulfilled’.

Surveying the first eighteen months of the Rudd Government, and with some heavy cutting and pasting from his *Australian* articles, Donnelly (2009) assembled an argument on why and how Rudd failed in his educational policy, but for Donnelly this was because of very different reasons than to which Caldwell (2009) and Keating (2010) ascribed. While Donnelly (2009, n.p.) acknowledged state and territory schools were ‘being radically transformed’ through ‘a national curriculum, national testing, national teacher registration, holding schools accountable or merit-based pay for teachers’, allegedly, Commonwealth was failing the standards test.

Changed political circumstances four years later would provide Donnelly with a hands-on opportunity to recommend changes to a new government, more to his political liking.

A *national* curriculum and the functioning of educational federalism in Australia

‘One of the unique characteristics of Australian schools is that they operate within a federal system. State and territory schools are answerable to their own jurisdictions as well as, increasingly, to the Commonwealth government’, observed Donnelly (2014, n.p.). Indeed, for Donnelly (2014, n.p.) ‘the Commonwealth has the money, thus the power.’ But to what

extent can we talk of a *national* curriculum, despite all this money and power?

Over recent decades, people increasingly are speaking and writing of a national curriculum (e.g., Harris-Hart, 2010). It is little surprise that schooling is a major focus of the current White Paper on the Reform of the Federation, Prime Minister Abbott's 2013 election promise, wrote Hinz (2016, 2). School education, and a 'national' curriculum assumed a fresh urgency as a result of the White Paper on the Reform of the Federation.

Underpinning the political nature of federalism and education, with political change came a change in political priorities: 'The Turnbull Government has abandoned at least \$5 million worth of work... election promise to produce a white paper on how to fix the relationship between the states and the Commonwealth', reported Borello (2016, n.p.). By 2016, however, the notion of a national curriculum truly was imbedded in *national* discourse.

Discourse concerning a *national* curriculum had been evident since the early 1990s. Possibly the first usage of the term 'national' in schooling came with Kenway's (1990) *National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools*. This usage of 'national' is usually a signifier that agreement has been reached at the Intergovernmental Council between the Commonwealth, States and Territories. Often occurring through a political and financial process, and this is markedly different from Commonwealth policy. Consequently in this respect it is problematic to talk about the ACARA curriculum when talking about the current 'national' or Australian curriculum, and consequently it may not be regarded entirely as Commonwealth Government policy. The development of this national curriculum was achieved through the work of COAG and the Intergovernmental Council in Education; thus this is the national rather than Commonwealth or ACARA curriculum. This is not without difficulties and tensions for the nation's schools. For example, Savage (2017) argued that the states now feel a little distanced from that curriculum, with more state level mediations of it occurring. Moreover, Lingard (2018) sees issues

regarding intellectual rigour in the outcome of political, financial and legal imperatives in the compromises in the development and of the national curriculum.

Federalism and politics and its implications for the Gonski Review

David Gonski's name dominated public educational discourse during the final years of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments. He is an Australian public figure and businessman, and a leading philanthropist and Patron of the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation. Gonski is of Polish heritage and born in Cape Town and migrated to Australia in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. From 2007, Gonski has been the Chancellor of University of New South Wales (Barlowe, 2007).

Then Minister for Education in the Rudd Government, Gillard commissioned Gonski to be chairman of a committee to make recommendations regarding funding of education in Australia. The findings and recommendations of the committee were presented to the government in November 2011, with deliberations by the Federal and state governments to consider its content. The committee's report is known as the Gonski Report. Subsequently, it became known as 'Gonski' (Kayrooz & Parker 2007).

In their research on Australian concurrent federalism and its implications for the Gonski Review, Keating and Klatt (2013) emphasised the central role of COAG as a forum for school education policy development. This meant the Commonwealth exercised strong control over the agenda. This state of affairs prompted Liberal Party Frontbencher, Andrew Robb (2012, n.p.), to declare 'a non-party-political public service has a vital role to play in effective implementation of any such vision, but it can only happen with strong parliamentary leadership. Robb (2012, n.p.) argued: 'The stultifying arm wrestle that the Council of Australian Governments has become is sad evidence of what will happen with critical reforms if left largely to huge teams of unaccountable state and federal bureaucrats'. In fact, for Robb (2012, n.p.), 'bureaucrats have proven to be more motivated and effective at

protecting their turf than their political masters'. A highly politicised national agenda, with reference to global demands, prevailed.

With its immediate comparative references in its Executive Summary to PISA scores and the OECD, the report is placed firmly in the *zeitgeist* of economic rationalism and globalisation. It began with a statement claiming 'high-quality schooling fosters the development of creative, informed and resilient citizens who are able to participate fully in a dynamic and globalised world' (Gonski, et al, 2011, xiii). Moreover, 'it also leads to many benefits for individuals and society, including higher levels of employment and earnings, and better health, longevity, tolerance and social cohesion' (Gonski, et al, 2011, xiii).

Gonski, et al (2011, xiii) claimed: 'Overall, Australia has a relatively high-performing schooling system when measured against international benchmarks, such as the ... [PISA]'. But, 'over the last decade the performance of Australian students has declined at all levels of achievement, notably at the top end. This decline has contributed to the fall in Australia's international position'. The report went on to lament: 'In 2000, only one country outperformed Australia in reading and scientific literacy and only two outperformed Australia in mathematical literacy. By 2009, six countries outperformed Australia in reading and scientific literacy and 12 outperformed Australia in mathematical literacy'.

The Gonski, et al. (2011, xiii) report then went on to bemoan 'in addition to declining performance across the board, Australia has a significant gap between its highest and lowest performing students. This performance gap is far greater in Australia than in many ... [OECD] countries, particularly those with high-performing schooling systems'. Indeed, 'a concerning proportion of Australia's lowest performing students are not meeting minimum standards of achievement. There is also an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage, particularly among students from low socioeconomic and Indigenous backgrounds' (Gonski, et al, 2011, xiii).

Then the report went on to argue for the national purpose of quality school education: ‘Funding for schooling must not be seen simply as a financial matter. Rather, it is about investing to strengthen and secure Australia’s future. Investment and high expectations must go hand in hand. Every school must be appropriately resourced to support every child and every teacher must expect the most from every child’ (Gonski, et al, 2011, xiii).

What does an old DOGS supporter say about the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments and Gonski? Way back in 1978 Jean Ely had argued against Whitlam’s fiscal support for Australian non-government schools. In her *Contempt of Court: unofficial voices from the DOGS High Court Case 1981, inter alia*, (Ely, 2011) argued the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments support for the Gonski initiatives paralleled Whitlam’s kowtowing to the non-government school sector. While Ely (1978; 2011) may have a point in this regard, she and her DOGS supporters hardly were going to garnish much support at a federal election.

Writing in an opinion piece in *The Australia*, in the months just before the 2013 federal election, Judith Sloane (2013) a mouthpiece for the then conservative Opposition began her assessment of the Gonski report by lampooning its nomenclature, and linking it to some kind of Soviet scheme. Sloane (2013) also ensured her readers understood it to be ‘one of the Prime Minister’s pet projects’, and the minister responsible—Peter Garrett—was labelled ‘an ex-pop singer’ who was enmeshed in an ‘increasingly desperate stewardship’ (Sloane, 2013, n.p.).

According to Sloane (2013, n.p.), the Australian Education Bill 2012 authorising the Government’s acceptance of the Gonski Report ‘was rushed through the House of Representatives late last year. What was the point? It read like a Labor Party pamphlet with lots of buzz phrases’. Moreover, when Sloane (2013, n.p.) stated, ‘the act did not create legally enforceable obligations’ she was being ingenuous, because that is the defining

characteristics of federalism: the Commonwealth needed to negotiate with each state and territory.

The Gillard Government at times was dysfunctional in its policy enactment, but these errors were amplified through a hostile News Corporation media. Linking arms with Kevin Donnelly, the notorious Labor critic proposed Gonski changes to Australian schooling may have High Court challenges.

Sounding what observers later understood to be the Coalition's agenda in government, Sloane (2013, n.p.) insisted the Commonwealth should be withdrawing from commitments to national education. Education was the responsibility of states and territories: 'But when it comes to leaving the control and management of public schools in the hands of the states and territories, the Labor government isn't having a bar of it'. More thoughtful and less politically biased commentators looked to the heart of the Gonski Report—that of dealing with the inequities in Australian school education.

On the release of the 1984 Cabinet Papers, Ferrari (2013) compared the Gonski Plan with the Hawke Government's needs-based funding system for schools to redress the widening gap in resources between government and non-government schools. Susan Ryan, now the Age Discrimination Commissioner spoke to Ferrari (2013). Ryan said she thought it was 'an argument she thought had been settled 28 years ago. Some things never go away; it's the same debate, same argument, just different dollars' (Ferrari, 2013).

In her online article for *FactSheet*, Saunders (2013, n.p.), in the lead-up to the 2013 election reported Pyne as stating 'there is a fox in the chicken coop in this plan and that is that the federal minister for education will have unprecedented power over state schools, and Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory don't want that and I agree with them' (Saunders, 2013, n.p.). In reviewing Saunders (2013), Twomey (2013) wrote 'I agree with this assessment. The Commonwealth will obtain

potentially wide powers with respect to schooling in the states through this Act and its broad regulation-making powers’.

Mockler and Thompson (2013, n.p.) spoke out on what they perceived would be the educational changes under an incoming Coalition government, especially turning the public discourse to issues associated with teacher quality, rather than equity for Australian students. They argued under years of Conservative government funding public schools have fallen behind non-government schools in student achievement: ‘Our expenditure on public schools is well below the OECD average, and has been declining in relation to that average since 2000, while our expenditure, both by governments and parents on private schooling, is above the OECD average’.

Only months after the Coalition’s September 2013 federal election win, Wilson (2013, n.p.) announced in *The Australian* ‘Christopher Pyne has declared the new Coalition government will go “back to the drawing board” on the administration of billions of dollars in school funding, claiming Labor’s so-called Gonski reforms are a “shambles” and impossible to implement’ (n.p.). Indeed, according to Wilson (2013, n.p.), ‘the opposition accused the Coalition of backing away from its “unity ticket” on school funding, Mr Pyne told *The Australian* the Abbott Government planned to review all aspects of Labor’s education funding reforms, amid revelations Kevin Rudd never signed off on the \$1.6 billion deal with the Catholic education sector, nor finalised bilateral funding agreements with the Victorian and Tasmanian state governments before the September election’. Consequently, for Pyne, ‘everything needs to be examined fresh, because the model that Labor came up with is a shambles and quite unimplementable’.

Pyne criticised the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments’ overhaul of the school funding system, describing the process as complicated, devoid of transparency and ‘much worse’ than the Howard Government’s socio-economic status-based funding model it replaced (Wilson, 2013, n.p.).

However, while a day is considered a long time in politics a week must be considered an eternity, particularly if one happens to be a Minister for Education. Zyngier (2013, n.p.) wrote: ‘After announcing last week they would dump the so-called Gonski model and the former government’s deals with the states, this latest announcement sees three new states sign up and the government honouring the other state deals again’. But then there was this warning: ‘But the government is only committing to four years of these agreements, not the original six promised by the Gillard government—leaving the states missing around 70% of the funding they were first promised’.

Under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments, the Gonski model of school education funding was named the ‘National Plan for School Improvement’ (NPSI). Pyne transformed it, now overlaying it with issues associated with teacher quality (Mockler, 2014, n.p.).

That, however, was not the only change facing the Gonski model of funding. In his political manoeuvring in dumping the Gonski funding arrangements, Pyne sought to move the discourse to teacher quality, and moving funding for school education from public to private. The latter point parallels his motive in university funding of moving funding costs from the public to the private purse by deregularising the sector and allowing universities to set their own fees (see for example, Kenny, 2014b). To be fair to the Coalition, however, in respect to its attitude to the Gonski package in Opposition it clearly flagged its policy.

Topsfield (2012, n.p.), for example, from the *SMH* wrote how ‘the federal Coalition has revealed it will repeal any legislation passed to introduce the Gonski reforms to the school funding system if elected to government next year’. Pyne was motivated to protect the Gonski package from causing an increase in private school fees. Topsfield (2012, n.p.) continued ‘anything the government did that undermined non-government school funding and was forced on parents we will dismantle,’ Mr Pyne told *The Age*, the *SMH*’s Melbourne-based partner in the Fairfax media stable. Moreover, ‘the

Coalition would re-introduce an establishment grant for new private schools, valued at about \$500 per student for the first two years’.

Illustrating his mistrust of state and territory governments and attempting to support private education, Pyne stressed ‘a Coalition government would also introduce a voucher system for students with disabilities as promised during the 2010 election campaign. Students with disabilities would receive an education card worth up to \$20,000 a year, which would follow the child whether they went to a public or private school’ (Topsfield, 2012, n.p.).

The education card ‘for students with a disability and those from low-income, indigenous and non-English-speaking families’ was not only meant to be transportable between the public and private sector, but was also designed to prevent federal funds ‘simply be[ing] subsumed into school budgets while the education card would make it clear the funding was specifically for the student with a disability’ (Topsfield, 2012, n.p.).

Through Topsfield’s (2012, n.p.) *SMH* article, however, Pyne assured Australian voters: ‘The Coalition has pledged to retain the existing funding model, even though the Gonski report said it was ‘unnecessarily complex’ and lacked “coherence and transparency” ’.

Another agenda by the Abbott-Turnbull Governments *vis-à-vis* school funding soon emerged. Unbeknown to many academics such as myself who had been involved in university-based teacher preparation since the Whitlam years, *inter alia*, there was a crisis in the university system of teacher preparation. Through the *ABC News* (*ABC News*, 2013b, n.p.) Pyne was reported as stating, ‘I want to move the debate from funding to teacher quality, a robust curriculum, principal autonomy and parental engagement’.

This is an example of an attempt to move the public discourse to one approaching moral panic. This strategy by Abbott and Pyne seeks to change the focus of the debate. This strategy is theorised in Kingdon’s (1984/2003) Chapter 5—the problem stream of the model. Problems, however, are not

always problems; often they are manufactured problems, with the media and other actants—for example, educational policy gurus and academics—contributing. Of course, it assists a great deal if there is strong political support, but during much of the time Abbott and Pyne were attempting to elevate this issue to a *genuine* problem, certainly from the time of the Government's first budget, the Government was suffering from very low support in the opinion polls.

Indeed, Kingdon (1984/2003) in his Chapter 5 suggests the budget is a particularly important case of indicators—budgetary issues are often cited as a major problem leading to reviewing issues and considering alternatives. In this respect, typically, the dumping of the Gonski initiatives were linked to a crisis in teacher quality. Here, according to the Kingdon model a problem is identified and based on focusing events, crises, or symbols. As Kingdon (1984/2003) showed in his Chapter 5 often policy entrepreneurs are involved in publicizing problems. In the case of our present discussion of constructing a problem concerning teacher quality, actants such as Donnelly played a role. Getting people to see problems, and framing problems in a particular way, is a major conceptual and political accomplishment, but nevertheless, an accomplishment which in this case had not materialised by the end of 2014, the first half of the Abbott-Turnbull Governments. Political support was crucial, but in this case, slow arriving.

Now in government, and following Pyne's dumping of the Gonski plan, *ABC News* (2013b, n.p.) reported, 'Education Minister Christopher Pyne is facing off against some angry state counterparts in the wake of his decision to dump Labor's Gonski school funding model'. It seems, according to *ABC News* (2013b) 'Mr Pyne created a political storm earlier this week when he pledged to renegotiate all school funding deals made by the former government' (n.p.). However, Pyne 'says the Government will honour funding for 2014 but beyond that, a new model will be implemented' (*ABC News*, 2013b, n.p.).

Pyne was off to a meeting with the states and territories, where he was going to make a special appeal to the non-government sector. ‘I’m going to ask them to work together with me, with the Catholic and independent systems, to come up with a model that has as its principles that it’s national, that it’s fair and that it’s equitable’, he declared *ABC News*, 2013b, n.p.).

Predictable, the states and territories railed against this declaration to abandon the Gonski package. *ABC News* reported ‘New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia all insist agreements for funding over the next six years were signed off under the previous government and must be honoured’ (*ABC News* 2013a, n.p.). On the other hand, in a separate news article *ABC News* (2013a, n.p.) reported Colin Barnett, the Western Australia Liberal Premier, linked arms with Pyne and Abbott, declaring his state and territory counterparts to “get real” over the Federal Government’s decision to scrap Labor’s Gonski education model’.

Abbott joined in, declaring there were no issues of broken promises, as indeed, the above Topsfield (2012) article testified. Such is the way sometimes of politics, twelve months later, the Abbott-Turnbull Governments with a lost Victorian state election, and a lost by-election in the state seat of in South Australia was reeling against accusations of broken promises, including those associated with building submarines in Adelaide (see, e.g., *ABC Victoria Votes*, 2014; *ABC News*, 2014b; *ABC News* 2014c).

Perhaps predictably, Donnelly (2013, n.p.) came out in support of the Abbott-Turnbull Governments, declaring: ‘With its misguided emphasis on students’ socioeconomic backgrounds and its discrimination against private schools, the Gonski education reform needed to be reviewed’.

In a more measure assessment of the above events, Zyngier (2013, n.p.) wrote: ‘It’s not too often you see a backflip on a backflip, but ... Pyne has managed it. It seems we’re in Gonski groundhog day. The repeated backflips and policy position switches from the Abbott-Turnbull Governments—only three months into its term—have been astounding’.

Watson (2013) wrote in *The Conversation*, reminding readers the Gonski funding package was about more than simple budgetary matters. Importantly, it was also about evidenced-based school improvement. Indeed, for Watson (2013, n.p.), the Gonski package represents ‘the culmination of efforts by both Labor and Coalition governments since the late 1980s to move beyond the “blame game” typical of federal interventions in the past’.

Yet, as we have seen faced with the politics of federalism, with almost wall-to-wall Coalition state and territory governments, the Abbott-Turnbull Government chose to stay with the Gonski funding model for four years at least. With the Abbott Coalition Government entering its second year, they were faced with the dilemma of having to stick to some form of the ‘Gonski-like’ program of the previous government for at least the next four years and through at least one election. Clearly, Pyne changed his position for political expediency. This, however, does not mean their problems have gone away, they are now only delayed.

COAG and educational policy

The federal and state public bureaucracies had long been politicised. Commonsense would dictate the accusations Robb (2012) levelled against the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments hardly would be reversed under a federal Coalition government.

The Schools and Education (n.d., n.p.) page of the COAG website stated: ‘Raising productivity is a key focus of COAG’s agenda, and education and training are critical to increasing the productivity of individual workers and the economy (n.p.). Reading as if a political brochure, the COAG website then stated ‘COAG is committed to improving education standards and the quality of schools’ (n.p.). Indeed, ‘the education reform agenda is being implemented with unprecedented levels of investment in Australia’s schools, and is making an important contribution to promoting social

inclusion and Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage, so that everyone has the opportunity to learn and work’.

The Schools and Education (n.d., n.p.) page of the COAG website has its first dot-point dealing with the improvement of ‘teacher quality’. This is consistent with the manner in which this research has argued how Pyne as Minister of Education has turned the focus from the public discourse surrounding equity and school funding to that of teacher quality.

Tied grant entanglements

When I discussed (Rodwell, 2009) the Howard Government’s ultimatum to states and territories with politicians, community-members, school principals and policy-makers—previously discussed in this research in Chapter Two—of the June 2004 \$31 million education package in which funding was embodied in the National Values Framework there was a negative response with state and territory governments. This usually surrounded the petty and ideologically driven nature of the tied grant, rather than the money, which was usually very welcomed.

Discussing the ongoing debate surrounding the policy significance of the conditions attached to tied grants, Hinz (2010, 4) observed, ‘some legal and economic analysts argue that the conditions erode state power—for example, Else-Mitchel, 1983; Zines, 1989—while some political scientists submit that the states retain a great deal of policy and program autonomy—for example, Galligan, 2008; Parkin 2007’.

Hinz (2010, 4) wrote there has been limited empirical research in the area of these tied grants, but what research does exist showed the ‘degree of state spending autonomy has shifted over time and between policy arenas’. Moreover, for Hinz (2010, 4), ‘seemingly detailed and restrictive conditions may reflect a consensual outcome of genuine intergovernmental negotiation. Likewise, seeming compliance to federal conditions may be bureaucratic illusion on the part of the states and territories, or simply distort pre-existing (or planned) state policies’. Hinz (2010) called for empirical research to

assess the affect of tied grants or Commonwealth programs on state education policies.

Financial and political leverage

The last three decades have shown the degree to which financial leverage of federalism has walked hand-in-hand with increased political leverage. Politicians seem to like it this way, because it affords more opportunity in challenging political situations, as we have witness when federal governments do not match with that of state and territory governments. One would suppose Minister for Education, Pyne would rather a wall-to-wall federal system of Colin Barnett-type support.

Hinz (2010, 4) contended most ‘scholars argue that Australia at federation was organized on the principle of coordination, with Section 51 of the Constitution in particular stipulating the limits to Commonwealth power’. However, ‘Others, such as Galligan (1995, 2008) and Walsh (2006), argued that concurrency and competition were intentional features of Australia’s constitution, pointing to Section 96 which gives the Commonwealth power to make grants to the states on such terms and conditions as it sees fit. This process provided constitutional legitimacy for involvement in state spheres of responsibility—and Section 109, under which the Commonwealth laws are given precedence over state laws, should the two conflict.

Indeed, to further this line of argument, Hinze (2010, 5) showed ‘Galligan (1995, 2008) goes so far as to say concurrency is “the defining feature of the Australian division of powers” ’. All this, underpins the observations this research has made concerning the increased use of political leverage in federalism, and the likelihood this will only increase.

Has the increased engagement of the Commonwealth in school education advantaged school education?

Quite demonstrably, the NAPLAN and *MySchool* regime established tools for policy development by educational authorities around the country. Gable and Lingard (2013, 17) reported on the policy imperatives of NAPLAN and *MySchool*: ‘Politically there is at the Federal level now bipartisan support

for an Australian curriculum and for NAPLAN. NAPLAN and *MySchool* have functioned as technologies of governance, which are helping to constitute a national system of schooling in Australia, as is the Australian curriculum in a different way'. Indeed, 'interestingly, NAPLAN data is now used in conjunction with international comparative school system performance data from studies such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS for accountability purposes' (Gable & Lingard, 2013, 17).

Confirming the national implications for NAPLAN and *MySchool* since their establishment by the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments, Gable and Lingard (2013, 17) conclude how these 'initiatives have rapidly expanded Federal levers for educational reform despite having no constitutional responsibility for schooling'. Now 'NAPLAN serves as the instrument of change from which good and poor performances are open to rewards and punishments. As a tool, NAPLAN holds the potential to generate, circulate and deploy performance information across multiple levels of audience' (Gable & Lingard, 17). Moreover, 'the data's subsequent representation forms the basis on which political action across these levels is justified' (Gable & Lingard, 17). All of this makes for fascinating crystal-ball gazing for researchers interested in Commonwealth leverage on school education.

Analysis and conclusions

Kayrooz and Parker (2010, 134) maintain in the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd contribution to the Commonwealth's involvement in school education 'the lack of a coherent educational framework informed by a deep knowledge of the Australian educational sector created conflicting policy agendas, some confused objectives and a lack of focus'. Many observers might argue this was an epoch of lost opportunities, and much of this was due to loss of political capital often forced by a hostile media provoking an atmosphere of moral panic.

A social conflict interpretation of educational history showed when governments assume increasing control of programs, be they educational or otherwise, once the prerogatives of the states and territories, a concomitancy

is they open themselves to a wider range of criticisms if there is any perceived failing by the voting public. With greater powers, so are the political dangers. But that is for governments. Considering the last three years of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd era was within the limitations of a minority government, much was achieved.

For possible political reasons, many commentators and politicians scoffed at the title of education revolution, but the BER and the influence of school buildings on school cultures and overall school education was massive. Australia's school underwent immense changes for the better. Now, many of the government school facilities compared very fairly with their private school cousins, and this must have an immense and long-lasting effect on students. The DER only added to these developments, while at the same time enhancing ITS skills.

As with the period of the Howard Government, the influences of globalism and economic rationalism during this epoch was sustained and extended. Evidence of this is in the execution of the NAPLAN testing regime and *MySchool*. Of course, AITSL and ACARA are other manifestations, all responding to influences such as the OECD. There could be no halting of the political momentum for these changes.

Kingdon's (1984/2003) political strand of his model surprisingly has little to say about 'manufactured' political circumstances conducive to the political strand of agenda-setting. The Abbott-led 2013 Coalition victory was assisted by the massive News Corporation media campaign against the second Rudd Government. How much it was assisted is conjectural, but there is no denying its potency at the time. Nor have there been any studies to show how this impacted on school education policy, and the degree to which the Abbott-Turnbull Governments terminated these policies.

The connect of risk society theory and the growing leverage of federal control of school education invites much research, as does the connect between the theory, moral panics and increasing Commonwealth control of

state education. A devoted scholarly monograph on the topic would greatly assist researchers.

Generally, an argument can be advanced Abbott and Pyne had a mandate to execute changes to school education policy. To what extent they could execute this would depend on their own maintenance of sufficient political capital necessary in negotiating with the states and territories any changes they sought. In 2013 at least, there seemed to be sufficient friendly conservative faces at the 2014 COAG, with all states and territories being controlled by conservative governments.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The still-vexed problem of ‘fixing federalism’ and Commonwealth engagement with school education remains a political football for both major parties. ‘Fixing federalism’ and ‘ending the blame game’ usually are major planks in federal election campaign for the major parties. Of course, we do not know exactly how much leverage this has with Australian voters. What we do know, however, is there has been a growing Commonwealth engagement in Australian school education, and this has been accentuated during the last decade. For better or for worse, the Commonwealth leverages on a vast range of school education policies, ranging from standards of teacher preparation, to assessment, to curriculum.

All incoming governments appear through the media to portray a desire to create a more simplified and efficient relationship with the states and territories. According to this research, however, they thrive on the political horse-trading that has been a hallmark by all parties of the federalist process onwards from the post-Menzies era. There is much political advantage for both parties in the blame game.

When circumstances were just right, when the appropriate *zeitgeist* prevailed, the Commonwealth was there, waiting at the school gate, waiting to push a little harder for yet another opportune moment to reach into the classrooms of Australian school education. Given some necessary tweaking, Kingdon’s *Agendas* is helpful in explaining how this is so.

With a hundred-and-fifteen years of federalism leveraging on Australian school education, we can now address the vexed question of what

politicians, academics, business people and policy-makers have advanced towards an understanding of the history of the kaleidoscope of federalism and its associated politics in the interests of school education students.

Beginning in 1907, as if a crafty interloper with a toehold on the door, over more than a century the Commonwealth has edged its way into school education with bundles of reasons why it should do so. The usual reasons are national imperatives, but the reason of global competitiveness is the one having the most profound and lasting influence.

Federal-state-territory relations in respect to school education have travelled a varied path, from the days of mandatory school cadets, though gentle and cooperative, but nevertheless educationally productive days of ministerial councils. The *ad hoc*ry of these and the Menzies years and the earlier ministerial council year with their accompanying political imperatives associated with the anxieties of the domino theory underscored what could be gained from the Commonwealth leveraging school education. The Whitlam Government ambitiously systematized this, and in doing so changed the face of Australian school education. Apart from considerably moving recurrent funding to the private sector, Fraser did little to interfere with Whitlam's measures. That, indeed, was politically astute. The Hawke and Keating governments returned to the old Labor ideals of a grander view, but it was now the age of economic rationalism and globalism, with school education being strongly influenced. Arguably, the drive for equity was a common thread between what Whitlam sought and what Hawke and Keating sought.

With past elections, certainly since the Hawke-Keating era, election pledges have included something on advancing and streamlining federalism usually in the interests of such key state and territory responsibilities as education, health and the environment. Incoming governments look to a new relationship with states and territories, and with that changed relationship, new arrangements for funding school education according to their own political ideologies and imperatives.

Kingdon's *Agendas* (1984/2003)

In the second edition of his *Agendas*, Kingdon added a tenth chapter—Chapter 10, 'Further Reflections'—to apply his theory to some issues occurring since the previous edition. One example was the US 1986 tax cuts. He noted in the mid-80s there was a strong agenda here, but the political moment was never right, despite all three streams being positioned to come together. Even with the national mood of anger over high taxes and the unfair benefits of tax loopholes for the wealthy, the political moment never arrived. Originally writing in 1984, Kingdon (1984/2003) suggested there was not a consensus on a feasible alternative, and this could cause the healthcare initiative to fail. How might a similar analysis be applied to instances in the history of the Commonwealth's engagement in school education in critical epochs during the long history of Australian federation? When were there occasions when the three streams never connected into policy?

An obvious instance here was the Abbott-Pyne's first-term agenda for 'gutting' public funding of universities—moving public debt to private debt—stalled because of inadequate political support in the Senate, and the government's falling levels of political capital, as reflected in sustained poor opinion polls. This may have acted as a warning to exactly how far it could go with a similar agenda with school education. It had dismantled the so-called Gonski 'reforms', and in doing so vastly reduced the Commonwealth's financial engagement with the states and territories. All that, however, was done in 2013, soon after the government's huge election win, but then came the ill-fated May 2014 budget, and the drastic fall in support for the government as reflected in the opinion polls.

Generally, Kingdon's model of policy development and enactment has provided a useful tool or lens for analysing various aspects of the long history of Commonwealth engagement in school education. Perhaps with some modification to allow for manufactured moral panic, or orchestrated scare campaigns, it is well-suited as a central focus or lens to a historical

study, in it places a focus on political motive and consequence, moving the analysis from featureless evolutionary idealism or dry-as-bone social control Marxist theory, to a more substantial analysis, highlighting the substance of social conflict theory with its imbedded drive for analysing political motive.

Theorising on historical change in the history of Commonwealth engagement with school education

To return to the ‘burning fuse’ of politics joining federalism, Kingdon’s model for agenda-setting and policy development, and the social conflict theory of historical change, it now seems conclusive there is little predetermined in the history of Commonwealth engagement in school education. The Marxist social control theorists have little credence. Moreover, certainly there is nothing to suggest governments act exclusively in the interests of the general ruling elite in advancing school education. Often, school education policies are more about government survival.

Social conflict theory supplements and complements Kingdon’s (1984/2003) model of agenda-setting, policy development and enactment because it searches for political motives. Unlike the other two theories of historical change assembled in this research, social conflict theory does not postulate heroes and villains, or write in the interests of political elites. There is no control by the powerful over the weak and subdued, as in the class conflict of the Marxist-inspired social control theory, nor are there heroes in governments and elsewhere steering school education to an ever-improving state, as is postulated in evolutionary idealism.

It was Fisher’s newly formed Labor, which for example, in 1911 enacted mandatory school cadets for boys twelve to eighteen years, beginning the following year. One can only imagine what this upheaval had on families, apart from the immediate turmoil, the manner in which it imbued military ideals on boys in what would soon become one of the greatest slaughtering fields in history. Fisher and his ilk, of course, were not to be expected to foresee that. All of this was achieved through coordinated federalism, with states cooperating with the Commonwealth. It does, however, point to the

fact repeatedly demonstrated in this research when the Commonwealth engages with the states and territories in school education political power is first positioned before the wellbeing of families. Witness the political manoeuvring taking place as the Fisher Government loaded the military bureaucracy with personnel sympathetic to the mandatory cadet cause, which Pyvis (2007) has demonstrated, and I have cited in Chapter Four. Moreover, this has been the pattern of Commonwealth engagement with school education through to the Abbott-Pyne political manipulation of ACARA and AITSL bureaucracies.

Challenges to Kingdon's agenda-setting model

This research has demonstrated the need for the Kingdon agenda-setting model to pay more credence to the developing role of contrived methods in the media in respect to moral panics in campaigns in generating a national mood for policy-making, and also the impact of such social constructs and moral panic theory and risk society theory. A scholarly monograph in these areas awaits research, writing and publication. One such example of this was the Pyne's orchestrated attempts to generate a moral panic in respect to standards of teacher preparation and national standards of teaching, itself. Here, through generating a moral panic, an attempt was made to develop a national mood to change policy. A compliant media was vital.

While public panic had been a part of federal intervention in school education in the past—xenophobia, Bolshevik scares, and so on—generating panic as a means to enhance the political moment for agenda-setting has captured the attention of educational researchers, such as Mockler and Thompson (2013) and Mockler (2014) in respect to the Abbott-Pyne attack on teaching standards, and particularly standards of teacher education. Research on the role of social media in this process has assisted greatly in our understanding in this matter.

Responding to international conditions, there is no doubt the Australian socio-political climate changed significantly sometime in the late 1980s or early-1990s, in turn accentuating the Commonwealth's leverage on school

education. There are some significant pointers to this, and these have been discussed in the previous chapter. But researchers have not comprehensively or seriously considered the way in which they connect with the social construct of the risk society. Indeed, the general impact of the risk society—if indeed, it is a serious social construct—on school education policy has been little attended to by educational researchers.

Risk society analysis

Yet, the question remains on how the role of the risk society in accentuating Commonwealth leverage on states and territories in respect to school education may serve as a lens to illuminate further educational policy in post-modernity Australia, especially, in this case in respect to federalism. With vastly increased Commonwealth leverage on the states and territories in respect to school education policy, there is a suggestion of a link between moral panic theory risk society and school education. As was the case with the politicised construction of the moral panic associated with alleged crumbling of teacher standards during the recent Pyne-Abbott years, there is a possibility there is a link here with the risk society.

The rise of the risk society since the 1970s and its purported effects on Australian society and politics has added a fresh dynamic to Kingdon's model of policy development and enactment, especially in respect to making full opportunity for the window of opportunity to open for policy developers and politicians. In a very real sense imperatives generated by the risk society can now assist in prising open this window of opportunity. Thus, by the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, Kingdon's model of policy development and enactment is in need of some tweaking in respect to the influences of risk society theory, the influences of moral panics and the increasing role of social media. But researchers are yet to explore these topics.

The language of 'reform'

The language of reform is for the political elites for the purpose of manipulating public opinion and gaining or sustain political power. Critical

discourse analysis (CDA) is a most insightful research tool in the kind of research accompanying this research. For example, troubling is the use the term ‘neoliberal reform’ repeatedly in the literature. Do writers mean ‘improve’, because that is the only apparent dictionary meaning? Or, do they mean ‘neoliberal developments/changes’? ‘Reform’ can only be synonymous with ‘improve’, perhaps, as is the case with some writers, journalists and politicians, even synonymous with words such as ‘progress’. And that is a concern.

The term ‘neoliberal education reform’ can only be an oxymoron, and more suited to writers of right-wing ideologies, or just simply careless writers. Admittedly, there are ample works, which use the word in the same manner, as a synonym for ‘improve’, or ‘progress’, but in doing so miss an opportunity to challenge the connection of neoliberalism and educational developments, particularly in studies (e.g., Sturges: 2015) which have at its core issues of equity. Of course, the same applies with other aspects of the history of moral panics impacting school education. I argue there is very little in “neoliberal reform” which was in fact ‘reform’—quite the opposite. ‘Change’ or ‘development’, yes, but not ‘reform’ or ‘progress’.

There are other issues with neoliberalism that can be challenged in the research on the language of neoliberalism: For example, words such ‘stakeholder’, is a part of the whole neoliberal discourse, and used as if to placate any moral panic or political opposition spinning off from educational policies associated with neoliberalism. Assisted by CDA, there is growing literature on this topic of why the neoliberal tide began to flow, and why so many educators and politicians abandoned the progressive ship, and clambered on board vessels, which I argue were travelling in the opposite direction. Risk society theory provides many insights into the neoliberal developments of the 1980s onwards.

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